United Nations S/PV.4724

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 March 2003

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 4724th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 20 March 2003, at 3.30 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record.

"On 20 March 2003, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 4724th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone and Head of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

"The members of the Council had a constructive exchange of views with representatives of participating troop-contributing countries."

03-28918 (E) 200303

United Nations S/PV.4725

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4725th meeting

Tuesday, 25 March 2003, 2 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Traoré	(Guinea)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Antonio
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	Chile	Mr. Streeter
	China	Mr. Jiang Jiang
	France	Mr. Florent
	Germany	Mr. von Ungern-Sternberg
	Mexico	Mrs. Arce de Jeannet
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Mr. Rostow

Agenda

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Letter dated 19 March 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/341)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-29390 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 2 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Letter dated 19 March 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/341)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2003/360, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to a letter dated 19 March 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2003/341.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1469 (2003).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 2.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4726

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4726th meeting

Wednesday, 26 March 2003, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Traoré	(Guinea)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/362)

Letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/363)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-29520 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/362)

Letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/363)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, the Federated States of Micronesia, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) and Mr. Mohd Isa (Malaysia) took seats at the Council table; Mr. Nesho (Albania), Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Listre (Argentina), Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Ivanou (Belarus), Mr. Mota Sardenberg (Brazil), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Giraldo (Colombia), Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Lagos Pizzati (El Salvador), Mr. Nakayama (Federated States of Micronesia), Mr. Adamia (Georgia), Mr. Vassilakis (Greece), Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Mr. Acosta Bonilla (Honduras), Mr. Ingolfsson (Iceland), Mr. Nambiar (India), Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia), Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Neil (Jamaica), Mr. Haraguchi (Japan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Mr. Jegermanis (Latvia), Mr. Diab (Lebanon), Mr. Own (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein), Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania), Mr. Capelle (Marshall Islands), Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius), Mr. Baatar (Mongolia), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. MacKay (New Zealand), Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Mr. Kolby (Norway), Mr. Stańczyk (Poland), Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea), Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland), Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand), Mr. Kerim (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Mr. Hachami (Tunisia), Mr. Cengizer (Turkey), Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), Mrs. Mulamula (United Republic of Tanzania), Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay), Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan), Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela), Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam) and Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, which reads as follows:

> "In accordance with article 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, I have the honour to request the participation of His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, in the discussion of the agenda item under consideration by the Council on Iraq, which will start on 26 March 2003."

That letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2003/370.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Yahya Mahmassani.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the requests contained in the letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq, which was issued as document S/2003/362, and in the letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, which was issued as document S/2003/363.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, at this meeting, and I invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: It is exactly a week since I last had the honour to address this Council. During that week we have all been watching hour by hour, on our television screens, the terrifying impact of modern weaponry on Iraq and its people.

We not only mourn the dead. We must also feel anguish for the living, and especially for the children. We can only imagine the physical and emotional scars that they will bear, perhaps for the rest of their lives.

All of us must regret that our intense efforts to achieve a peaceful solution, through this Council, did not succeed.

Many people ask why the Iraqi Government did not take full advantage of the last chance they were given by the Council, by cooperating actively, wholeheartedly — in substance as well as procedure — with the inspectors that the Council sent to ensure that Iraq was disarmed of weapons of mass destruction. But at the same time, many people around the world are seriously questioning whether it was legitimate for some Member States to proceed to such a fateful action now — an action that has far-reaching consequences well beyond the immediate military dimensions — without first reaching a collective decision of this Council.

The inability of the Council to agree earlier on a collective course of action places an even greater burden on it today.

The Council, which has now had Iraq on its agenda for 12 long years, must rediscover its unity of purpose. We all want to see this war brought to an end as soon as possible. But while it continues, it is essential that everything be done to protect the civilian population, as well as the wounded and the prisoners of war, on both sides, and to bring relief to the victims.

This obligation is binding on all the belligerents. The Geneva Conventions and all other instruments of international humanitarian law must be scrupulously respected. I would recall in particular the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, under which those in effective control of any territory are responsible for meeting the humanitarian needs of its population and are required to maintain dialogue and cooperation with international organizations engaged in humanitarian relief. No one, on either side, must obstruct that relief.

Last week I drew the Council's attention to the dire plight of the Iraqi people, even before these latest hostilities, and the extent of their dependence on the oil for food programme for medical supplies and food distributed under that programme.

The programme has now come to a halt, with some $2.4 billion of supplies, mainly food, in the pipeline. The Council needs to determine how it will adjust the programme to make it possible for those supplies to reach the Iraqi people under the present circumstances and to ensure that food, medicine and other essential, life-sustaining supplies continue to be provided. I am aware that a concerted effort is being made to reach agreement, and I hope that it will soon succeed.

But the conflict is also now creating new humanitarian needs, which the oil for food programme is not expected to cover. We do not yet know how many people will be injured, displaced from their homes or deprived of food, water, sanitation and other essential services. But we fear that the numbers may be high.

As I said, the primary responsibility for meeting these needs falls on the belligerents who control the territory. But the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations are ready to help. Indeed, they have been preparing actively to do so. Even though their

international staff had to be temporarily withdrawn from Iraq, most of them have national staff who even now are at work, bringing what limited relief they can to their fellow citizens. Those brave and devoted Iraqis deserve our profound respect.

I fear that the humanitarian effort required in the coming weeks and months is going to be very costly. We are about to launch a "flash appeal" to donors. I urge Member States to respond swiftly and generously, and not to do so at the expense of victims of other emergencies in other parts of the world, which may be less newsworthy but are no less devastating for the people caught up in them.

This Council has other heavy responsibilities related to this crisis. It needs to determine how it will address the many needs of the Iraqi people, whatever the outcome of the war, and what the United Nations itself may be asked to undertake. For anything beyond strictly humanitarian relief, we need a mandate from the Security Council.

Needless to say, the Council's responsibilities also extend far beyond Iraq. There are many other conflicts that urgently need its attention — not least the conflict that inflames passions throughout the Middle East and colours so many people's attitudes to the Iraqi issue. I mean, of course, the tragic conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, for whom the noble vision of two States living side by side in peace and security, which the Security Council laid out just one year ago, is still far from being realized.

In the last few months the peoples of the world have shown how much they expect of the United Nations, and of the Security Council in particular. Many of them are now bitterly disappointed. Their faith in the United Nations can be restored only if the Council is able to identify and work constructively towards specific goals. I urge the five permanent members, in particular, to show leadership by making a concerted effort to overcome their differences.

For my part, I would emphasize two guiding principles, on which I believe there is no disagreement, and which should underpin all your efforts or your future decisions on Iraq. The first principle is respect for Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. The second, which flows logically from the first, is respect for the right of the Iraqi people to determine their own political future and control their own natural resources.

Let me conclude by saying that we are living through a moment of deep divisions, which, if not healed, can have grave consequences for the international system and relations between States. By your interventions this afternoon in this debate you have it in your power to deepen those divisions, or to begin to heal them. I appeal to all of you to choose the latter course, and to reunite around a new resolve to uphold the principles of the Charter. This is essential if the Security Council is to recover its rightful role, entrusted to it by the Charter, as the body with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

For my part, I am prepared to work with the Security Council, on this crisis as in others, and to assist in any way deemed helpful.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes. I stress this matter, so that the Council can carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver the condensed versions in this room.

As another measure to optimize the use of our time, in order to allow as many delegations as possible to take the floor, I will not individually invite speakers to take seats at the Council table, nor will I invite them to resume their seats at the side of the Council chamber. When a speaker is taking the floor, the Conference Officer will seat the next speaker on the list at the table.

I thank Council members for their understanding and cooperation.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Iraq, on whom I now call and invite to make his statement.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Iraq, a founding Member of the United Nations, is being subjected to criminal, tyrannical, barbaric American-British military aggression. This aggression is killing women, children and the elderly, and it is destroying the lives and future of the people of Iraq, who are the people of civilization — of Sumer, Babylon and Akkad.

Previously, they tried to kill our civilization through a weapon known as sanctions. These sanctions

lasted more than 13 years, during which a whole generation of children and youth was destroyed. Condolences here are extended to you all — the entire world community — and to all those who love peace and security in the world.

The American-British full-scale military aggression commenced at dawn on 20 March 2003. United States President Bush declared at that time that the goal of this aggression was the occupation of Iraq and the change of its political regime. As his Secretary of State, Colin Powell, previously stated, the goal of the aggression was to change the political map of the Middle East region to ensure the interests of the United States and Israel. This constitutes a blatant violation of international law and of the United Nations Charter; it defies the international community and deviates from international legality.

The aggression has targeted, among other things, civilian installations — economic infrastructures, homes, schools, hospitals, mosques and churches in Iraq's cities and villages. It has led to thousands of casualties, including women, children and the elderly. For example, the water and electric facilities in the city of Basra were destroyed. This will lead to a health disaster and to a real crime of genocide.

The Moustansiriya Mosque in Baghdad was bombed, and a popular bazaar in the same city was also bombed today. On 20 and 21 March, the American-British invaders and aggressors dropped more than 2,000 long-range guided missiles. They conducted more than 1,000 daily aerial sorties over all of Iraq's cities and villages, during which they used cluster bombs and prohibited new weaponry, much bragged about, to terrorize Iraq.

It is known that the American and British troops penetrated the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait after the United Nations Secretariat withdrew the monitors of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), in blatant violation of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which provided for the inviolability of borders between Iraq and Kuwait. The Security Council must react to ensure that these borders are respected.

The United States and Britain have deployed in the south and west of Iraq in order to launch their forces against Iraqi cities and villages. However, the Iraqi armed forces and armed civilian units, made up of the great Iraqi people, are fighting honourable and fierce battles against this foul aggression and are confronting it with heroism.

The invaders and aggressors say that the goal of their aggression is the disarmament of Iraq. However, the whole world knows that the task of verifying Iraq's compliance in disarmament was entrusted not to the United States and Britain but to the United Nations itself, through the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In their report to the Security Council on 7 March, these two agencies stated that the inspections conducted during three and a half months did not find any evidence contradicting Iraq's declarations and no evidence of the existence of proscribed activities or items in Iraq. Yet today the whole world is well aware that the real reason for this aggression and invasion is the occupation of Iraq, to recolonize it and control its oil wealth.

The international community is also well aware that the Security Council has not authorized the use of force by the United States and Britain. The international community is aware that resolution 1441 (2002) did not allow the use of force at all. Both Britain and the United States confirmed when resolution 1441 (2002) was adopted that it did not contain a hidden agenda, trigger or automatic use of force. Nevertheless, despite the opposition to war of the majority of Council members, and despite Iraq's cooperation with UNMOVIC — according to its Executive Chairman's declaration — these two countries launched their criminal war against Iraq.

The full-scale Anglo-Saxon military invasion and the hostile, aggressive war against the Republic of Iraq constitute a blatant material breach of international law and the of United Nations Charter, particularly Article 2, paragraphs 4 and 7. It is also a material breach of the relevant Security Council resolutions. All of these resolutions, without exception, oblige United Nations Member States to respect Iraq's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity.

This colonial Anglo-American aggression is a blatant defiance of the will of the international community and its organizations, all of which have expressed their total rejection of the unilateral use of force, their adherence to international legal instruments and their emphasis on the essential role that the United

Nations has to play in maintaining international peace and security and in suppressing acts of aggression.

This barbaric, colonial military aggression against Iraq constitutes a dangerous violation of regional and international peace and security. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, are called upon to condemn this invasion and aggression. They are called upon to work to put an end to it immediately, without conditions. The Council must demand that the American-British aggressors and others withdraw their attacking forces immediately outside the borders of the Republic of Iraq. It must hold them fully responsible for this act of aggression, in accordance with international law. It must impose respect for Security Council resolutions and their implementation, particularly those relating to the lifting of the unjust sanctions against Iraq.

While we thank all the countries, peoples and personalities who have called for peace and for the removal of the spectre of war, we are still hopeful that the international community will be able to impose its will on those who have broken international law. We hope it will find a peaceful solution to spare the world the dire consequences that will come out of that aggression and to prevent that aggression from giving rise to a new era of colonialism. The signs of that are becoming evident through the domination of one Power over the destiny of the world, with its dependent other Power. This will mean the collapse of the United Nations and the current international system.

Allow me before concluding my statement to point out that in the past few days during the period of aggression the Council has been busy considering the humanitarian aspect rather than the act of aggression itself. Is it not strange that humanitarian questions, however important they are, are being discussed before the war and aggression, which are the main cause for the need to consider the humanitarian aspects? Should not the Council pay attention first and foremost to the cessation of the war of aggression and pay attention to the lives of the Iraqi people, who are subjected to killing and destruction every day in barbaric, evil acts of aggression, which cannot be ignored? Is this not an attempt to put the cart before the horse and distract the Council from its main role in the maintenance of international peace and security?

Who stopped the oil for food programme? Who withdrew the inspectors from Iraq? Who withdrew the monitors from the Iraq? Was this not done with the agreement and the blessing of the Council? How could the Council allow itself to be manipulated — and it bears repeating, manipulated — in a matter regarding which the United States and United Kingdom could not obtain a resolution that legitimized the act of aggression.

We hope that the Council will be able to stand up to the machinations that have originated with the United Kingdom and are being implemented by the United States, which can only deceive those who blindly follow those two countries.

Mr. Mohd Isa (Malaysia): Since this is the first time I am speaking in the Council as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month and assure you of our full cooperation. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Germany, for his excellent stewardship of the Council last month.

On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, and members of the Council, for again agreeing to convene this open meeting of the Council on the current situation in Iraq. As members of the Council will recall, serious efforts were made earlier this month to avert war in Iraq and we clearly expressed the views of the Non-Aligned Movement at the open meeting of the Council on 11 March 2003. Unfortunately, those efforts failed.

Military action against Iraq has been going on for one week. The relentless assaults from sea, land and air are continuing as we sit here in the Council chamber. While this is taking place, the Council has remained silent until today. While the Council remained silent, stark images of this twenty-first century war are seen all around the world continuously. We have just today seen the image of a market being struck by a missile. Millions who see these images daily must be wondering where the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, stands on this issue. The prompt decision of the Council to hold this meeting today is a welcome development. It should offer some hope to those of us in the international community who remain committed to multilateralism and the central role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Non-Aligned Movement strongly maintains that commitment.

The Non-Aligned Movement strongly believes that all Member States should observe and abide by the Charter and the principles of international law in dealing with problems among nations. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement has continuously stressed the vital role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and the strengthening of international cooperation. We oppose all unilateral military actions or use of force, including those made without proper authorization from the Security Council. We deplore any unilateral action against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Member States.

The war against Iraq has been carried out without the authorization of the Security Council. This war is being carried out in violation of the principles of international law and the Charter. In this regard, it is highly regrettable that the parties concerned had chosen early in the day to cast aside multilateral diplomacy and take the path of war, while efforts to avert conflict were continuing in earnest. We view unilateral military action as an illegitimate act of aggression. This war should not have been started in the first place. Therefore, it should end immediately. Let us return to the Security Council to find the solution to this complex problem.

The Non-Aligned Movement wishes to reiterate its commitment to the fundamental principles of the non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and security of all Member States. We continue to believe that the problem of Iraq should and could be resolved peacefully through the United Nations. We reaffirm our commitment towards achieving a peaceful solution to the current situation and stress the vital role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We call on the Security Council to use its power and authority, as mandated by the Charter, to revert to the multilateral process in the common effort to resolve this issue.

The Non-Aligned Movement stated last month at its thirteenth Summit in Kuala Lumpur its belief that a war against Iraq would destabilize the whole region and it could have far-reaching political, economic and humanitarian consequences, not only for Iraq but also for the rest of the world. We reiterated this in the Council two weeks ago. We continue to maintain this position today.

With the military activity now escalating in Iraq, we are extremely concerned over the humanitarian situation of the civilian population in that country. There are reports, for instance, that the people in Basra will be facing a serious humanitarian disaster, including shortage of basic needs such as electricity and water, if relief supplies do not reach them in time. We hope that the sufferings of the civilian population can be relieved as soon as possible. While the responsibility for this lies with those countries that initiated military action against Iraq, the international community must also assist the United Nations in carrying out the important task of providing humanitarian relief.

It is important that all parties to the conflict observe human rights and other humanitarian issues such as treatment and protection of civilians. They must respect international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We strongly believe that all avenues in the peaceful disarmament of Iraq should have been explored. We regret that despite confirmation by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Iraq was actively cooperating and that the inspections were producing results, the inspectors were not given adequate time to fulfil their mandate and had to be withdrawn because of the war. We also regret that the inspectors were not allowed to continue with their work, despite the overwhelming calls by the international community, including the majority of the members of the Security Council.

We had welcomed the decision by Iraq to facilitate the unconditional return of, and cooperation with, the United Nations inspectors in accordance with Council resolution 1441 (2002). However, it was unfortunate that the war has now made it impossible for the inspectors to work. We note that the Secretary-General emphasized on 24 March 2003 the importance of the resumption of inspections by the United Nations inspectors.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that international peace and stability can be preserved, with all States adhering to the fundamental principles of the non-use of force and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and security of all Member States. We appeal to all concerned to

exert all efforts to urgently return to a peaceful solution in enforcing Iraqi compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions. We will continue to work closely with Member States on the appropriate course of action — including upholding the centrality and sanctity of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter — in addressing issues relating to international peace and security, now and in the future.

The Security Council, as the custodian of international peace and security, has a special and heightened responsibility to ensure that the international world order is based on the principles of justice and international law and not on military might.

Now I wish to speak on behalf of Malaysia.

Malaysia takes the position that unilateral military action undertaken without the support and authorization of the Security Council violates international law and the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, the doctrine of pre-emptive strikes has no foundation in international law. Malaysia views the unilateral military action undertaken by the United States and its allies as illegal and as being tantamount to an invasion of an independent and sovereign nation. What is more, it is a unilateral action taken on a selective basis and premised on tenuous evidence, while a viable mechanism exists to ensure Iraqi compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions. Malaysia is, therefore, compelled to condemn that action.

Malaysia wishes to underline that the pre-emptive use of force threatens the very foundation of international law, making war once again the tool of international politics and of the powerful in subjugating the weak and defenceless. It also erroneously asserts the notion that might is right.

In view of the humanitarian catastrophe that is now unfolding in Iraq, as well as the grave threat to international and regional peace, security and stability arising from unilateral military action, Malaysia calls upon the United States and its allies to return immediately to peaceful but firm methods for bringing about Iraq's compliance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Malaysia joins the international community in underlining the urgency to address the humanitarian catastrophe in the wake of military action. We share the view of those who take the position that the United States and its allies that have initiated military action must bear the full cost of providing humanitarian assistance.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

Mr. Mahmassani (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to congratulate you once again, Mr. President, on your wise conduct of the work of the Security Council.

The Security Council is meeting today in an emergency meeting to consider the war being waged by the United States and the United Kingdom against an Arab State, namely, Iraq, as well as the repercussions of that war on the security and safety of neighbouring Arab States and on Arab national security. Since 20 March, the armies and air forces of two permanent members of the Security Council have, without the Council's authorization, been waging an unequal and unjust war against Iraq, which has been a Member State of the Organization since the signing of the Charter.

The ministerial decision adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States on 24 March 2003 in connection with the Anglo-American aggression against Iraq decided the following:

> "To condemn the American/British aggression against Iraq, a State Member of the United Nations and a member of the League of Arab States;" (*S/2003/365, annex, para. 1*)

> "To deem this aggression a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, a departure from international legitimacy, a threat to international peace and security and an act of defiance against the international community and world public opinion, which call for the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and compliance with the decisions of international legitimacy;" (*ibid., para. 2*)

"To call for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the invading American-British forces from Iraqi territory and to make them bear the material, moral and legal responsibility for this aggression." (*ibid., para. 3*)

"To mandate the Arab Group at the United Nations to call for an urgent meeting of the Security Council, with a view to the adoption of a decision to halt the aggression and to secure an immediate withdrawal of the invading forces beyond the international borders of the Republic of Iraq, affirmation of respect for Iraq's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity, and a commitment by all States not to interfere in its internal affairs." (*ibid., para. 5*)

American and British forces have chosen to wage war at a time when Iraq was actively cooperating with United Nations inspectors. The inspectors themselves stated as much in the Council, saying that they needed a few months to carry out their tasks. In that regard, we once again wish to reaffirm that the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) is the only party authorized to disarm Iraq.

Would it not have been better to wait a few months in order to avert a war that we today watch in agony, sadness and terror? This war will have grave consequences in both the region and the world. It is taking place despite the fact that the Security Council, despite numerous pressures and temptations, has refused to give its approval to a draft resolution that would have provided a mere fig leaf for the waging of an unjustified war.

The waging of war against Iraq today leads us to believe that the question of Iraq was never about weapons of mass destruction. The motive behind the war was to usher in a dangerous era in which absolute power is made necessary in order to implement plans and schemes against the peoples and States of the region, so as to redraw the map of the region in a way acceptable to the occupying Power. This is totally unacceptable and will cause turmoil in the Arab world, and in the Middle East in general.

At this difficult time, when the Arab nation is facing grave challenges, we once again reaffirm that the form of the Arab peoples' political regimes must be decided by the peoples of the region without foreign interference. Any attempts to impose changes on the region, to interfere in its affairs or to control its resources are totally unacceptable. In addition, they will have grave consequences on regional stability, including in the Mediterranean region.

At a time when we had hoped and waited that good offices would bring an end to Israel's occupation of Arab territory and to the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Arab initiative and relevant international resolutions, we have been stunned to see Iraq invaded and occupied. Now we must deal with two occupations, instead of just one. This will generate violence, extremism and hostility among the Arab peoples. The good relations of Britain and the United States with the Arab peoples depend upon the policies of those two States vis-à-vis fateful Arab issues. Unfortunately, all we see in that connection is negative, biased and not objective.

The real threat to the safety and security of the Arab nation is Israel's possession of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Another threat is Israel's ongoing occupation of the Arab territories, its policy of killing and destruction against the Palestinian people and its refusal to comply with Security Council resolutions.

The current international system, established in 1945 after the Second World War, is in grave danger. The world is fast moving into an arena of frustration and international chaos. The security and safety of weak States are in serious jeopardy. The imposition of the logic of force and domination and the flouting of the United Nations Charter and international law will plunge the world anew into its pre-1939 condition and foment wars that will bring nothing to humanity but tragedy, pain and sadness.

We call upon the Security Council today to shoulder its obligations as the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. How can the Security Council remain silent while this violent war is being waged before its very eyes? How can the Council turn a blind eye to the devastation, the aggression and the hundreds — nay, thousands — of civilian victims of this war? We call upon the Council to put an end to this war and to urge the immediate withdrawal of the invading forces. That is the Council's responsibility, upon which depends its credibility and, indeed, the credibility of the entire international system, which is collapsing under the multifaceted bombing of Basra and Baghdad.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It has taken so much loss of human life, such unspeakable horror and terrible destruction; the bloodcurdling terror of millions of innocent people subjected to a horrible campaign of shock and fright, coldly conceived and planned; and hundreds of millions of people crying tears of blood before the fury of a war broadcast live for the Council — to which the nations of the world have given the responsibility of forever protecting us from war — to realize that there is a nation in danger of death and that, if it should turn away, it would have to assume an onerous responsibility before God, humankind and history.

The Council has therefore decided to meet today following the joint request of the Group of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement. I am sure you will agree with me, Sir, that it was high time for it to do so. The situation we face today is so serious and fraught with peril for a people and a country whose very existence is threatened; for a region that is already heavily battered and bruised; and for humanity challenged in terms of its very humanity that to do nothing would be tantamount to complicity in failing to help a nation in jeopardy.

How can the use of such extreme, disproportionate and definitive measures be justified when no present and immediate danger was threatening international peace and security and when the inspections instituted by the Security Council for the peaceful disarmament of Iraq were proceeding in the right direction?

How can we characterize the irreparable damage inflicted on millions of children who had already been made sickly and famished by the sanctions that the Council imposed on them? They have been rudely awakened in the middle of the night and kept awake for days, terrorized, stupefied and plunged into a permanent nightmare by explosions of such unbelievable power that they have made us flinch even in front of our television screens and shaken us to our deepest foundations?

While we rightly worry about the effects of televised violence on our children, who can predict the serious trauma and immense suffering of these millions of children who have been robbed of their childhood and their innocence, who have been forever branded by the mark of horror, and who will never forget the unbearable ordeal that, in a split second, turned their lives forever inside out?

Neither they, nor all those who have been demonstrating against this war for months — including here in New York, where we have seen the families of the victims of 11 September leading the peace march because, having experienced it in their souls and in their flesh, they know what man's folly can be — can resign themselves to believing that freedom and security can be bought at such a price. These children will undoubtedly bear permanent scars and their hearts, like those of anyone whose hopes have been robbed, will be heavy with sorrow, bitterness and frustration.

Since the onset of the crisis, Algeria has called for a peaceful settlement of the conflict based on Iraq's full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Only a few days ago, we warned of the dangers and perils that a conflict in Iraq would entail for Iraq itself, the countries of the region and world peace. We wish today to express our immense sadness and grave concern before this terrible ordeal being imposed on the brotherly Iraqi people, who, besieged and bloodied, is meeting adversity with a courage and a dignity that compel our admiration and respect.

We say this with the conviction of those who know from experience that war is always the worst of solutions and that civilians always pay the highest price, as borne out by the unbearable images of hundreds of civilians, including women and children, who have been killed or wounded by the bombing. In spite of censorship, self-censorship and worse, such images have forced themselves willy-nilly onto our television screens.

Algeria profoundly regrets that the inspection missions were abruptly cut short just as they were beginning to bear fruit thanks to Iraq's active cooperation. Algeria wishes to recall that the force to which Iraq is today subject has not been duly authorized and that it does not therefore meet the required conditions of legality and legitimacy. In fact, a precedent of exceptional gravity has been set in international relations, against which the Secretary-General issued a warning on 11 March when he stated that those who would decide to act outside the Security Council would be doing so in violation of the United Nations Charter. Moreover, it is obvious today that the objectives of this war go well beyond those of Security

Council resolution 1441 (2002) and that this is not merely a question of destroying the weapons of mass destruction that Iraq claims not to possess.

For all these reasons, my country fully endorses the resolution adopted on 24 March by the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States, calling for the immediate cessation of acts of war and the total and unconditional withdrawal of foreign forces. This is a pressing and solemn appeal that can be ignored neither by the Council nor by the coalition that is waging war against Iraq.

It is for these reasons, too, that we reiterate the obligation of strict respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Iraq, reaffirm our full solidarity with the brotherly people of Iraq in their current terrible ordeal, and call for strict compliance with the Geneva Conventions relative to prisoners of war and to the protection of civilian persons in times of war.

It was likewise with regret and dismay that my country learned of the Secretary-General's decision on 17 March to put a halt to the activities of all United Nations bodies present in Iraq. While we understand the security reasons behind this measure, we would point out to the Council that the suspension of the oil for food programme is about to unleash a veritable humanitarian disaster, particularly in Basra, as the Secretary-General himself indicated two days ago.

The suspension of this humanitarian programme will mean neither more nor less than stopping the delivery to Iraq of medicine, food and other humanitarian supplies at the very moment when, deprived of water and electricity and subject to the fury of combat and bombardment, Iraq's civilians need more than ever to be protected, assisted and effectively led.

We therefore call for the immediate resumption of the oil for food programme, which must be administered under the authority of the Council, and only according to the terms of existing signed contracts. It is understood that when the sanctions are lifted, the system in place will have lost its reason for being and that any adjustment to the programme should not prejudice the future or violate the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Iraq. Nor should it violate the principle of the Iraqi people's right to dispose freely of their resources.

When the founding fathers created the United Nations, it was clearly not to create an agency for dispensing humanitarian assistance — as important and as necessary as that can be — in cases of catastrophe and armed conflict. The United Nations was, in fact, designed to realize ambitions and to embody the greatest ideals.

It is, above all, a political organization comprised of nations motivated by the will to work together in taking up the many challenges facing humanity today. The global, transnational nature of those challenges obliges all States, large and small, to unite their efforts and to act collectively and in solidarity to tackle them with success. The United Nations is the institution that embodies our universal conscience, the organization to which all look when there is a threat to international peace and security. This institution is expected to ensure peace, justice and law and to protect the weakest and most destitute. It is a unique forum in which the nations of the world come together to dream and to construct together, through dialogue, collaboration and cooperation, a safer and more just world in which the rule of law is applied to all, in all circumstances.

Therefore it is our duty, the Member States, and that of the Secretary-General — as he has just demonstrated in his statement before the Council this afternoon — to ensure that this Organization, irreplaceable from any point of view, is not sidestepped, marginalized, weakened or relegated to a minor role but, rather, emerges enhanced by the trials imposed by the circumstances. Otherwise, it would lose its soul, and we would all suffer for it.

Today the Council truly stands at a crossroads. It faces a situation of extreme gravity that touches upon its very reason for existence and which obliges it to do all to maintain international peace and security. The Council's responsibility is today greater because this is a question of the unauthorized use of force and because the Council is expected, at the least, to call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the return to peaceful means for the settlement of conflicts.

Is that too much to ask of the Council, which remains for so many nations, large and small, despite the disappointments and frustrations, the object of our hopes and our will to create a safer, more just world and the last defence against brute force and the law of the strongest?

The President (*spoke in French*): Before I call on the next speaker, I would like to request that, in view of the long list of speakers, all delegations refrain from congratulating the President so that we can hear all the speakers on the list. I again ask all speakers to limit their statements to five minutes, as I asked, so that we can conclude our work within the time allowed. We currently have 72 speakers on our list.

I now call on the Permanent Representative of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Once again the Security Council faces a new challenge in the discharge of its responsibilities with respect to the painful circumstances in the Middle East. Those challenges are posed by the ongoing aggression of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian people and their territory and the continuation and increased ferocity of the military operations in Iraq after the failure of efforts to reach the peaceful settlement called for in the Council's resolutions.

Difficult days have passed since the outbreak of hostilities in Iraqi territory. Today we meet to consider the collective action we should take to put an end to the fighting and to resume political action in the framework of international legality with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement to this crisis. That way, we would spare the people of Iraq and the peoples of the Middle East and the whole world the scourge of a war that will bring nothing but destruction, devastation, destabilization and threats to the welfare and security of peoples. It is a war that threatens to reach grave dimensions and to have serious, long-lasting and far-reaching repercussions.

Egypt has participated actively in the various stages of international action on the question of Iraq throughout the last decade. Egypt's approach is based on its firm belief in the need to act within the collective international security system provided for in the United Nations Charter. It is also based on the absolute need to preserve the territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of Iraq, as well as the territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of its neighbours.

Undoubtedly, if the international inspection regime in Iraq had been given sufficient time and if all States had maintained the position that peace was possible and deserved going the extra mile within the framework of international legality, it would have been possible for humanity to prevent the painful picture we see today — the picture of the dead and wounded soldiers and civilians, whose numbers will only increase in coming days. The loss of a single victim is a loss to humanity, the loss of a single victim is a seed of resentment and revenge that will continue to haunt succeeding generations, who will have to pay the price of these sad and disturbing developments.

As the genuine representative of the conscience of the international community and the source of international legitimacy, the Security Council is called upon to send a clear message calling for the immediate cessation of fighting in the territory of Iraq and for the attempt to resume efforts to reach a settlement by peaceful means. It is called upon to affirm the inadmissibility of any infringement on the sovereignty of Iraq and its neighbours and to affirm Iraq's sovereignty over its territory and resources. All parties must respect international humanitarian law and the responsibilities that flow from it. We the members of the international community have the common duty to urge the Council to assume its responsibilities swiftly.

At the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the League of Arab States on 24 March, an important resolution was adopted that pays tribute to the advocates of peace. The resolution contained important elements that must be taken into account by the Security Council in its consideration of the question of Iraq and its grave repercussions for international peace and security. Foremost among those elements is the cessation of the aggression, the withdrawal of foreign forces, the reaffirmation of respect for Iraq's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity and the need for all States to refrain from interfering in Iraq's internal affairs.

The international action for the elimination of proscribed Iraqi weapons cannot ignore the fact that such action will remain incomplete without the full implementation of paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991), which calls for making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The disarmament of prohibited Iraqi weapons is only one step towards that objective, which must be fully implemented at the regional level, as called for by resolution 687 (1991).

The international community, on the basis of the rule of law and respect for international legitimacy, demands that the Council and its members safeguard the Charter, which rejected war and called for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Resorting to war and

the use of force epitomizes, in our view, the failure of political action aimed at achieving the peaceful settlement of disputes.

I cannot believe that the Council, under any circumstances, would not assume its responsibility under the Charter of maintaining international peace and security. Nor can I believe that the Council would delay acting to put an end to a tragedy that endangers the lives of thousands of people and undermines the foundation of the edifice constructed by the world in order to avert the recurrence of violence and cruel wars.

Finally, if we were to reject war at all costs and also reject peace at all costs, we now have the opportunity to build peace upon a foundation that is clearly based on law and legality and the hopes of humanity, including the right of peoples to live free of weapons of mass or limited destruction.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President, for having called on me to express the position of the Republic of Yemen regarding the invasion of Iraq.

The Republic and people of Yemen support the Iraqi people, who daily — indeed hourly — are tallying victims. We regret this terrible crisis that is causing division in international relations, waged by the coalition States without the authorization or resolutions of the Security Council. We are deeply concerned by the impact that this war will have: the death of thousands of innocent civilians and destruction sown not only in Iraq, but also in the region as a whole. This will open the door wide to extremism, instability and failed security in the countries of the region. We must think very hard in order to avert the repercussions of this illegal war.

Even before the first missile was launched against Iraq, we saw the Security Council divided between a majority that encouraged continued inspections of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which had already yielded positive results, and a minority that wished to halt all efforts towards peace and push towards war.

We have witnessed the tensions that followed, which caused a clear fissure in relations among States and have marginalized the Security Council and paralysed it in its role of maintaining international peace and security. It has led to a new stage in international relations that is characterized by the violation of agreed principles and the adoption of the politics of force.

The military invasion of Iraq brings tragedy for Iraq and the region as a whole. It also places the future of international relations at great risk. There is not enough time to expound on this now, so I shall merely summarize the position of the Republic of Yemen regarding what is occurring in Iraq.

First, the Republic of Yemen considers the military invasion of Iraq totally unjustifiable, particularly given Iraq's dedication to the principle of implementing international resolutions on the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, particularly resolution 1441 (2002), as was confirmed by the reports of the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Using force against others for reasons other than self-defence and without a Security Council mandate constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of international law and the Charter.

Secondly, the coalition countries have said that they are determined to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, under the pretext of implementing relevant Security Council resolutions, while they have not been authorized by the Council to do that. Their refusal to consider Israel's nuclear, chemical and biological arsenal reflects a policy of double standards and shows that there are ulterior motives in dealing with the issues of the region.

Thirdly, the invasion constitutes in form and content unacceptable conduct that is highly risky to international relations. The declared policy to change the Iraqi regime is an act of aggression carried out against a sovereign, independent State that is a Member of the United Nations, and it constitutes interference in its domestic affairs.

A pre-emptive war, based on mere doubts about the intentions of others, leads to chaos that will undermine the basis of international relations. The Republic of Yemen supports the resolutions adopted by the most recent Arab summit, as well as the decisions adopted by the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Arab States that have reaffirmed the need to respect Iraq's sovereignty, political independence, territorial

integrity and the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs. Similarly, the Republic of Yemen supports the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Kuwait.

Despite the very precarious situation, we are nonetheless optimistic about the multifarious international consensus against the war in Iraq. But this must be crystallized into a policy to put an end to this tragic war. That is, in fact, the responsibility of the United Nations. It is the United Nations that must determine the commitment of Member States to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter and must ensure respect for international legitimacy.

In conclusion, we should like once again to express our deep concern at what the people and the land of Iraq are being subjected to and we appeal for a halt to the aggression, destruction and blood-letting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We gather here today in response to a request made by the Group of Arab States in implementation of a decision adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States on 24 March 2003. That decision was issued along with a reservation by the State of Kuwait, because the decision makes no mention of Iraqi aggression directed against the State of Kuwait in the form of missile attacks or of Iraq's violation of relevant Security Council resolutions and of all decisions issued by Arab summits calling for respect for Kuwait's independence, sovereignty and security. Therefore, Kuwait's reservation cannot be attributed to today's Security Council meeting — as can be seen by our active participation in it — but rather to the reasons that I have just cited.

At the outset, I should like to express our profound sadness, anguish and sympathies with regard to the innocent victims — both the injured and those who have died — among the brotherly Iraqi people, and to those among the coalition forces who have fallen as a result of ongoing military operations. We wish solace and speedy recovery to them and their loved ones. This is war; these are its effects. Therefore, Kuwait joins other countries in stating its position that war must be the last option. Recourse to war should be made only after all other means have been exhausted.

The Kuwaiti people, more than others, is fully aware of the effects of the ongoing military operations in Iraq. Those operations have resulted from Iraq's persistent refusal to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions concerning the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The Council will recall that, in 1990, the Kuwaiti people languished for seven months under a brutal, abhorrent Iraqi occupation that led to murder, torture, the desecration of sanctuaries and genuine suffering as a result of the Iraqi regime's brutal practices. During that bleak period, Iraq, the occupying Power, did not even allow international media or humanitarian organizations — in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross — to enter occupied Kuwait to monitor and convey such suffering to the world through reports and documented images. That situation is unlike what we are witnessing today. Present media coverage of the military operations and of their effects on the Iraqi people is of an unprecedented scope. Therefore, Kuwait urges the coalition forces to continue to take every possible precautionary measure in order to avoid causing human losses and to avoid exposing civilian lives to danger, pursuant to international humanitarian law and to the relevant Geneva Conventions.

With regard to current developments, my country takes the following positions.

First, the State of Kuwait reaffirms that it has not participated and will not participate in any military operation against Iraq and that all measures we are undertaking are aimed at protecting our security, safety and territorial integrity.

Secondly, Iraq, since its invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990, has continued its aggressive policies against Kuwait, its people and its Government. The most recent of such practices is the launching of Iraqi missiles against inhabited civilian areas in Kuwait since 20 March. Iraq's missile attacks have continued until today, which reaffirms the appropriateness of the defensive measures taken by Kuwait, by fraternal countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and by other friendly countries to protect Kuwait's security, sovereignty and stability.

From this rostrum, I salute the forces of the Al-Jazeera Shield, composed of forces from the Gulf Cooperation Council, which have come to Kuwait to help it protect its security and stability and to stand side by side with its armed forces and those of other

friendly countries. We believe that Iraqi attacks against civilian targets in Kuwait constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the League of Arab States and the Charter of the United Nations. We call on the international community and on the Security Council to condemn these attacks, to demand that Iraq immediately put an end to them, and to stress the need to respect Kuwait's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Moreover, these Iraqi attacks involve many important considerations.

First, the Iraqi Government is trying to drag Kuwait into the war and to compel it to participate in these operations. However, Kuwait will not be drawn in by desperate Iraqi attempts aimed at achieving such an objective.

Secondly, the missiles that Iraq is aiming against Kuwaiti civilian areas have a range that exceeds 150 kilometres. Some of these missiles have landed on residential areas in Al-Fuhayhil city in southern Kuwait, which is irrefutable proof that the Iraqi Government possesses proscribed missiles whose range exceeds that allowed by Security Council resolutions. That proves the invalidity of the Iraqi Government's earlier claims that it does not possess such missiles.

Thirdly, Kuwait reaffirms that its position on the ongoing military operations against Iraq is in conformity with relevant Security Council resolutions and with the legal obligations on Iraq that proceed from them. This fact has been totally flouted by the Iraqi Government. Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) also included a clear warning to Iraq that it would face grave consequences if it remained in breach of these decisions. Kuwait reiterates its unequivocal position, declared before the Security Council in previous meetings, that the Iraqi Government bears full responsibility for the grave consequences confronting it now.

All members of the international community have called on the Iraqi regime to try to avert reaching this stage, cognizant as they were of the decisions of international legitimacy, which authorize, according to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the adoption of all measures to ensure Iraq's observance of relevant Security Council resolutions and ending Iraq's defiance of those resolutions. Some brave and sincere initiatives have been submitted to the Iraqi leadership aimed at sparing the Iraqi people the suffering they are facing today, yet the leadership rejected all of them.

Fourthly, the images recently displayed by the media of coalition forces' prisoners of war (POWs) taken by Iraq, including the inhuman treatment of the POWs by parading them before the media, prompt us to again express to the Council our grave concern for the fate of the Kuwaiti prisoners and nationals of third countries who have been detained by Iraq since 1990. We call on the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) to intervene promptly with the Iraqi Government and to demand that it respect the principles of international humanitarian law, especially the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and to disclose the fate of our prisoners as soon as possible, pursuant to relevant Security Council resolutions.

Fifthly, Kuwait calls on the Security Council to focus on the future situation of the entire population of Iraq and to attempt especially to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Iraq and elaborate a speedy plan that ensures fulfilment of the humanitarian requirements of the Iraqi people and ensures their right to a decent life. In this regard, we support the proposals and other ideas submitted by the Secretary-General to the Council and presently under consideration, including amendment of the oil for food programme. Kuwait calls for granting the Secretary-General the necessary authority to lead this urgent humanitarian task.

Sixth, the Government of Kuwait has elaborated a comprehensive plan to extend all forms of humanitarian assistance to our brothers, the people of Iraq, directly and through the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies, as well as the other humanitarian organizations. Under these circumstances, Kuwait has established a centre to provide humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people. Kuwait has also provided financial assistance in the amount of $5 million to a number of humanitarian agencies, including the ICRC, the World Food Programme and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In the coming days, Kuwait will announce more contributions to finance the humanitarian activities of other agencies in Iraq in response to the appeal of the Secretary-General.

Seventh, Kuwait is keen to preserve the wealth and national resources of Iraq and to thwart the

desperate attempts of the Iraqi regime to create an environmental catastrophe in the region. Kuwait has dispatched a specialized team from its oil ministry to Iraq to extinguish a number of oil wells that Iraqi forces intentionally ignited in the Rumailah oil field. Two days ago the Kuwaiti team successfully extinguished the fires in one well and currently is working to extinguish fires in other wells.

It is regrettable that the Iraqi Government destroys the potential and wealth of the Iraqi people rather than preserve and develop such resources. It is well known that the Iraqi regime has many precedents. Before withdrawing from Kuwait in 1991, Iraq burned more than 700 oil wells in Kuwait, causing an environmental catastrophe whose consequences Kuwait and other countries in the region still suffer from. It is also regrettable that the Iraqi authorities continue to plant mines in the waters of the Gulf to prevent the use by coalition forces of the harbour of Umm Qasr and to hinder the arrival of humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people in southern Iraq, rather than to facilitate such assistance.

There is no doubt that such practices confirm the conviction of the international community that the Government of Iraq is oblivious to the suffering of the Iraqi people and that its main purpose is to stay in power at any price.

As it confronts these momentous challenges in Iraq, either with regard to establishing peace and stability, or to fulfilling the now urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people as they undergo their current predicament, the Security Council must overcome its divisions and unify its ranks. The Council must set as its objective the interests of the Iraqi people and all that is necessary to bring about their security, stability and development and to compensate for years of deprivation, torture and displacement. History will then credit the United Nations with its expected role in Iraq, as it acts in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Own (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having promptly granted the request to hold this meeting to discuss a grave situation in which international peace and security are threatened because of aggression against the people of Iraq.

First, I express my respect and admiration for the resisting people of Iraq, who are fighting courageously in these critical moments of their history and the history of the Arab region. At a time when there would be repercussions in the Middle East, it is regrettable that the few and poorly armed people of Iraq would be targeted by powerful nations on an unprecedented scale, by air, ground and sea attacks and by advanced conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

There has been continuous daily bombing of cities, villages and the infrastructure of the Iraqi people, with many innocent civilian casualties. We see this on all television stations except those of the aggressor States, which are hiding what is going on and providing erroneous information, although they pretend to be defending freedom and democracy.

At the beginning of this aggression, which went outside the scope of international legality, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as well as Security Council members, said that it was a sad day for the United Nations and the international community. Millions of people around the globe shared this feeling of disappointment. This war has frightened them and touched their souls. It is a sad day that the international community is experiencing. One of the major States of the United Nations has violated the collective spirit; collective legal efforts were abandoned. This Organization, established by our fathers and our grandfathers, has become marginalized, even though it has been the place to settle disputes through peaceful means. It is clear that substantial damage has been done to the United Nations and its institutions, and it will be in a difficult state for a long time.

The evil aggression that is being conducted by the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as a small number of other allied nations, against an independent and sovereign State that is a Member of the United Nations constitutes a flagrant violation of all laws and international norms. It is a blatant violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and it disregards all the efforts of the institutions that are responsible for maintaining international peace and security, including this Council. The resolutions that have been adopted — most

recently resolution 1441 (2002) — do not authorize the use of force against Iraq. Moreover, this was explicitly stated by the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom when the resolution was adopted. They stated that resolution 1441 (2002) did not stipulate automatic use of force and that they did not have hidden motives except the disarming of Iraq.

It became clear to everyone that the objective was not to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, for this had already been realized and confirmed by the chiefs of the inspections teams in statements and in reports and, in particular, in the work programme. The two States declared that regime change in Iraq, establishing freedom and democracy and respect for human rights, was the main objective. So, we wonder whether it is legal to commit aggression against another State and to change its regime. How can freedom and democracy be carried out with missiles and bombings that destroy all civilian institutions and facilities in Iraq and cause hundreds of deaths, including women, children and the elderly? This aggression has torn and destroyed their bodies, their homes, their schools, their hospitals, their towns and their villages. Is this democracy? Is this the freedom we hoped for at the start of the twenty-first century?

Who are the great Powers on whom the international community has bestowed the right and responsibility to maintain peace and security and the right of veto? How can this privation and these killings be justified? How can we make sure that the rights to life, security, food, health services and water are respected? Is it reasonable to stop programmes that have been established by the international community to provide the Iraqis with their essential needs for survival? How can we justify stopping the oil for food programme without a decision by a legal body, the Security Council in this instance? Is it wise to conduct a war unequalled in scope and in destructive capacity? Is it reasonable to just provide humanitarian assistance to the victim and let it go at that? Should we not demand that this unjustified and destructive war be stopped immediately, since it is against international legality? Is it not just to demand the withdrawal of all forces from Iraqi territory and to compensate the Iraqi people for the destruction and killing?

The people of Iraq do not need the humanitarian assistance that is being requested by some of the coalition States that are trying to provide it from the wealth and resources of Iraq, although they have stopped the oil for food programme. The people of Iraq have refused to head off towards the camps that have been prepared in the border regions of their country. Iraqis who live outside their country are returning to their country to defend it. They are not living in the so-called freedom camps that the aggressor States thought they would fill with millions of refugees.

We see a clear connection between these evil designs against Iraq and the tragedy that is taking place in the Arab world, ignored by the aggressor States. I am talking about the killings perpetrated by the Zionist occupying forces in the occupied Palestinian territory. These are killings of an unarmed people by an occupying State that has highly sophisticated weapons that it uses against civilians. Dozens are dying daily and these so-called democratic States do not lift a finger. It is protected by the aggressor State, which uses the right to veto in the Council, therefore making it impossible to take any measures against Israel, including the implementation of resolutions, the withdrawal of occupying troops from the Palestinian territories, allowing the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and establish an independent State on its territory. It is ironic that the invading States are calling for the implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention on prisoners of war in spite of the illegality of this war, even though these same States reject the implementation of the Convention on the Palestinians' territory. The right of veto has been used by these States within the Security Council to block the adoption of a resolution calling for the occupying Israeli State to follow the Fourth Geneva Convention and to protect the Palestinians from daily killings.

We point out that 11 Council members were opposed to military action; 116 Non-Aligned Movement countries and 57 countries from the Organization of the Islamic Conference were all opposed to the use of force, because it represented a threat to their States and to international peace and security.

My country, as the current President of the 119th session of the Council of Ministers of the Arab League, categorically states that we support our Council of Ministers resolution. We are asking the Security Council to condemn this aggression against the people of Iraq, to stop the aggression by all available means, to ask the invading countries to withdraw their troops immediately and unconditionally, outside of Iraq's

international borders, and to confirm the sovereignty of Iraq, its political independence, its unity and territorial integrity.

The people of Iraq must be able to choose their future under their own sovereignty and in their own national interests, so that they can maintain their wealth without interference in their internal affairs in order that peace, security and stability can be restored in Iraq and all countries in the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Ethiopia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia and Zimbabwe in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item of the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objections, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica), Mr. Kmoníček (Czech Republic), Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia), Mr. Nakayama (Federated States of Micronesia), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Ms. Novotná (Slovakia) and Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 26 March 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2003/372 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held today, Wednesday, 26 March 2003, on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the current debate in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 26 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group, I have the honour to request that Ambassador Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, be allowed to participate in the debate in the Security Council on the item entitled 'The situation between Iraq and Kuwait', in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2003/371.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Lamani to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area Iceland declare that they align themselves with this statement.

With the beginning of the military conflict in Iraq, we are faced with a new situation. Our hope is that the conflict will end with the minimum loss of human life and suffering.

At the meeting of the European Council on 20 and 21 March, the European Union heads of State and Government addressed the common challenges we face.

The European Union is committed to the territorial integrity, sovereignty, political stability and full and effective disarmament of Iraq on all its territory, as well as to respect for the rights of the Iraqi people, including all persons belonging to minorities.

The European Union believes that the United Nations must continue to play a central role during and after the current crisis. The United Nations system has a unique capacity and practical experience in coordinating assistance in post-conflict States. The Security Council should give the United Nations a strong mandate for this mission.

We urgently need to address the major humanitarian needs that will arise from the conflict. The European Union is committed to be actively involved in this field, in accordance with established principles. We support efforts based on proposals by the Secretary-General to adapt the oil for food programme to changing circumstances so that it can continue to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

We want to contribute effectively to conditions allowing all Iraqis to live in freedom, dignity and prosperity under a representative Government that will be at peace with its neighbours and will be an active member of the international community.

On the regional front, the European Union expresses solidarity with and stands ready to assist those countries that are faced with problems and risks as a result of the conflict, including possible refugee flows. The European Union will actively engage in supporting regional stability. We call on all countries of the region to refrain from actions that could lead to further instability. The countries of the region have also a particular responsibility to prevent acts of terrorism.

The European Union will continue to work actively towards the reinvigoration of the Middle East peace process through the immediate publication and implementation of the road map as endorsed by the Quartet.

We will deepen our dialogue and cooperation in all fields with the Arab and the Islamic worlds. We hope that it will soon be possible to use the considerable opportunities offered by the Barcelona process to good account.

We reiterate our commitment to the fundamental role of the United Nations in the international system and to the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and stability.

We will continue to contribute to the further strengthening of the international coalition against terrorism. Finally, we will also intensify work for a comprehensive, coherent and effective multilateral policy of the international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): Indonesia has joined countries that have asked for the convening of the present meeting of the Security Council to address the current critical situation in Iraq.

Some seven days after the virtual abandonment of the multilateral path by the United States of America and its allies, Governments and peoples around the world have been witness to the immense and intolerable sufferings that have been inflicted on the people of Iraq. Our collective conscience demands that the aggression be immediately stopped.

For some weeks now we have been agonizing over the very future of the United Nations system, which has been sidelined by the wilful unilateral action of the powerful, and whose authority has been undermined. Our shared interest in a world order that respects equality among nations and the primacy of multilateralism, as reflected by the United Nations, demands that unilateralism be immediately checked. And during those same weeks, all of us have pondered the multidimensional consequences of the war for the Middle East region and beyond.

Our shared commitment to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war demands that the United Nations should not stand idle.

It is for these reasons that Indonesia has demanded the convening of the present meeting and commends the President of the Council for making it possible. The very fact that the Security Council is meeting today is a step in restoring its authority. Indeed, much more is at stake than the fate and the future of the nation of Iraq.

Indonesia has strongly deplored the unilateral action by the United States of America and its allies, who have decided to launch a military attack against Iraq in contravention of international law.

Like others, the Government and the people of Indonesia have been witnessing with profound sadness the humanitarian toll and intolerable suffering that have been inflicted on thousands of innocent and vulnerable civilians in Iraq. At this stage in the conflict, we are already witnessing with profound concern rising casualties among the combatants on the ground, which all of us fear will continue to grow as the military confrontation intensifies. As we meet today, we face the ever alarming prospect that the fighting will spiral out of control.

Even if the fighting were to end today, we would already have a grave humanitarian crisis on our hands. According to information in the hands of the United Nations in that respect, there are already 300,000 internally displaced people in the north of Iraq. Similarly, the United Nations Children's Fund reports that in Basra there is no electricity and that the water supply has been interrupted. This suffering is being inflicted on a people who have for many years now endured the hardships of sanctions.

However, in our justified concern to immediately and collectively address the grave humanitarian situation in Iraq, we should not lose sight of one important fact: the countries that have chosen the path of war in disregard of the once ongoing process within the Security Council bear a special responsibility to address the unfolding humanitarian suffering resulting from their action.

Beyond the humanitarian implications on the people of Iraq, the very territorial integrity and national sovereignty of that country have been put at great risk. The Government of Indonesia has consistently emphasized that any solution to the question of Iraq should respect the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of that country.

The international community should not lose focus of what has been, and continues to be, the central problem, namely, the issue of disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) provided a clear road map to effectively address that issue through the inspections regime. Indonesia has been steadfast in its principled position against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We have therefore consistently urged Iraq to comply with its obligations under that resolution. We were encouraged by the report given by Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. ElBaradei, namely, that the inspection process was making progress and should be continued. Hence, diplomacy, combined with judicious pressure, was yielding results.

We should not, and cannot, underestimate what is presently at stake. The fate of the people of Iraq is certainly at stake. The future of neighbouring regions and of those beyond — politically, strategically and economically — are most definitely at stake. Nor can we be oblivious to the potential environmental impact of the war. Ultimately, however, it is the very foundation of the United Nations system and its inherent principle of multilateralism that are being tested. Unilateralism, from whatever source, must be held in check.

The Security Council must, and must be seen, to be seized of an issue that is in fact preoccupying all of us, Governments and peoples alike. Its silence with no call for an immediate cessation of the aggression is deafening indeed. Indonesia hopes the Council will not fail to shoulder its Charter-mandated responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The Council must unite and join the clarion call emanating from many councils of nations, and being voiced by peoples the world over, to end the war.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): The moment we had feared has come to pass. Iraq is in the midst of a bitter war. Some States have come together to invade Iraq without the authorization of the United Nations. This unilateral resort to force is compounded by the fact that progress was being made in dealing with the disarmament of Iraq through inspections authorized by the Security Council.

We regret this war, as do millions of people around the world. We recall the position of the African Union and the Non-Aligned Movement that war is not a solution to the world's problems. We reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, and believe that the people of Iraq must be allowed to determine their own future and freedom.

Now more than ever, the United Nations must play a central role in securing an end to the war. The United Nations is the primary institution that gives legality and legitimacy to our collective efforts to secure peace and security in the world. The fear is that

despite optimistic expectations, this war may result in an unwanted occupation that will further complicate the achievement of peace and stability in the entire region.

The war in Iraq must not be allowed to lead to the erosion of the principles and values that are contained in the Charter of the United Nations. For more than 50 years, the international community has relied on the United Nations to address disputes and promote peace and security in the world. Imperfect as it may be, the United Nations is the principal institution governing the international political system, and endows legality and legitimacy on our actions.

It is for that reason that we agree with the Secretary-General that

> "Perhaps if we had persevered a little longer, Iraq could yet have been disarmed peacefully, or — if not — the world could have taken action to solve this problem by a collective decision, endowing it with greater legitimacy, and, therefore, commanding wider support, than is the case now." (*SG/SM/8644*)

As a country that voluntarily disarmed itself of weapons of mass destruction, South Africa strongly believes in a world free of all weapons of mass destruction. Ideally, we believe that no State should possess such weapons. We therefore made every effort to ensure that Iraq fully implemented all relevant Security Council resolutions, including 1441 (2002). It is for this reason that we agreed with the weapons inspectors when they indicated that they needed more time — "months not years", to quote Mr. Blix — to assure the world that Iraq is free of weapons of mass destruction.

The tragedy of the war in Iraq is that it continues to produce civilian and military casualties. Although we may disagree on the need for this war, we cannot ignore its casualties. The Security Council has a role to play in ensuring that provisions are in place to assist with the delivery of humanitarian relief to the Iraqi people. We would wish to caution the Security Council from being drawn into drafting a resolution that would provide tacit or implied approval of the military operations that are under way in Iraq at this time.

The Security Council must pass a resolution on humanitarian assistance that upholds the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and ensures that the natural resources of Iraq remain in the hands of the people of Iraq. South Africa believes that the open-ended and punitive sanctions that the people of Iraq have been forced to endure for more than 12 years must come to an end.

As an interim measure, the oil for food programme is important for the people of Iraq. According to the Secretary-General, 60 per cent of the 27 million citizens of Iraq depend on the programme for daily sustenance. We agree that this programme could be adjusted to ensure that the humanitarian goods that have been ordered by the Iraqi Government are delivered. It is also appropriate to prioritize the delivery of essential medicines and food from the existing contracts and to ensure that the most urgent needs of the Iraqi people are addressed.

The war in Iraq should not destroy the foundation of the rules-based system of collective security with which the United Nations and its Charter provide us. The founders of the United Nations sought to bring predictability to international governance. They envisaged a world order in which the lives of the innocent and weak would be protected, and not one that is premised on military might and the law of survival of the fittest. The United Nations is more relevant than ever in a world confronted by complex challenges. There are places all over the world where peace must be won. Iraq is no exception.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The aggression of the United States and the United Kingdom against Iraq deserves strong condemnation and should be stopped immediately. The Security Council should fulfil its primary responsibility in the restoration of the international peace and security that have been shattered by this act of aggression.

The United Nations, including the General Assembly, must exercise all the powers and functions entrusted by the Charter to guarantee peace, security and the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Kuwait and all the States of the region; to protect the Iraqi people and re-establish the implementation of international law and international humanitarian law, particularly that of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I; and to

ensure respect for the human rights of the Iraqis, especially their right to life.

We all had hopes, but we all knew this would be the outcome. More than two thirds of the members of the Security Council and three of its permanent members tried for weeks to avert war, noted its potential consequences and offered diverse solutions inspired by two premises: that any unilateral attack would be a violation of the Charter and international law; and the necessity of the complete implementation by peaceful means of the relevant resolutions of the Council itself.

Nevertheless, the inspections were suspended when tangible progress was being achieved. We duly noted the risk that the scope of resolution 1441 (2002) would be manipulated or distorted and we were sceptical about the public assurances given then by those who later started the war.

In reality, Iraq had been sentenced long before. We know that Iraq neither offers nor is able to offer the slightest threat to the national security of the United States or its allies. Rigorous analysts have submitted evidence that the attack against Iraq had been planned even before the criminal terrorist act of 11 September against the twin towers.

President Fidel Castro has addressed the causes, pretexts and factors of the crisis and offered solutions, particularly in his speeches of 28 January; 14 and 25 February; 6 and 22 March. In Kuala Lumpur, our President stated:

> "In his speech to the graduating cadets of West Point on 1 June 2002, the United States President stated: 'Our security will require transforming the military you will lead — a military that must be ready to strike at a moment's notice in any dark corner of the world.'
>
> "That statement was not made by the Government of a small and weak nation, but by the leader of the richest and mightiest military Power that has ever existed, the same that possesses thousands of nuclear weapons — enough to obliterate the world population several times over — and other fearful conventional military systems and weapons of mass destruction.
>
> "That is what we are: 'Dark corners of the world'. That is the perception some have of the third world nations. Never before had anyone offered a better definition.
>
> "The former colonies of Powers that divided the world among them and plundered it for centuries constitute today the group of underdeveloped countries. There is nothing like full independence, fair treatment on an equal footing or national security for any of us; none is a permanent member of the Security Council with a right of veto; none has any opportunity to be involved in the decisions of the international financial institutions; none can keep its best talents; none can protect itself from the flight of capital or the destruction of nature and the environment caused by the squandering, selfish and insatiable consumerism of the economically developed countries.
>
> "After the last world carnage in the 1940s, we were promised a world of peace, the reduction of the gap between the rich and the poor and the assistance of the highly developed to the less developed countries. It was all a huge lie. An unsustainable and unbearable world order was imposed on us. The world is being driven down a dead end."

It is necessary to halt this course of events if we want to survive — Europe and the developed and developing countries, without exception — as sovereign and independent States; if we want to preserve peace and the collective security system that cost humankind 50 million deaths and hundreds of thousands of lives to the United States people; and if we want to defend the already precarious existence of the United Nations as a main element and symbol of multilateralism.

Cities are not "secured" but destroyed by bombs; precision-guided ammunitions do kill and mutilate civilians and traumatize millions of people terribly. All prisoners deserve humane and honourable treatment and are protected by the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocol I. International humanitarian law should be totally and universally implemented and respected.

The priority now is to stop the bombing of and aggression against Iraq. It is also a priority to protect and provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the civilian population, for which the United Nations and its Secretary-General have all the necessary powers.

Nevertheless, we cannot accept that the aggression and the occupation of territories should be legalized or endorsed under humanitarian pretexts, which would serve only to encourage war and would essentially distance us from the ceasefire and from those very humanitarian principles and objectives that have been declared.

The Security Council and the Secretary-General must be extremely careful in their mandates and responsibilities. Nothing should be done against the political independence and sovereignty of Iraq or its territorial integrity. The aim of the United Nations is now to achieve a ceasefire and to stop the aggression, not to speculate or to do anything under the pretext of being anticipators able to validate an eventual Anglo-American occupation Government in Iraq, or whatever it may be called, nor to invent in advance United Nations mechanisms on the ground or procedures to commit those who opposed war to undertake the costs of a distant and unpredictable reconstruction.

The main thing is to do the impossible to stop the death and destruction and to achieve the end of the war and the withdrawal of the invading forces from the occupied territories. Public opinion, that extraordinary and booming force, shall be severe in the judgement of our conduct.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): The New Zealand Government deeply regrets the breakdown of the diplomatic process and the hostilities that are now under way. While we acknowledge the endeavour to avoid civilian casualties, the loss of life on both sides is of deep concern. It is also essential that the Geneva Conventions be adhered to by all parties.

But our immediate focus now should be to the future. Our common objective must be to end hostilities as quickly as possible, so that the risks to the Iraqi people are minimized and so that their humanitarian needs can be met. Those involved in initiating the military action appear to have acknowledged their responsibilities in this respect in their planning. The broader international community needs to respond urgently to the United Nations call for humanitarian relief funds. New Zealand has already announced a contribution to relief agencies, and we are looking at other ways we can help as needs and means become clearer.

The Security Council must move to resolve practical issues relating to the oil for food programme in these circumstances. The programme needs to continue to operate effectively. The Secretary-General has made proposals for its continuing effectiveness, and the Council should work quickly to reach an agreement on this.

This has been an extremely divisive and difficult period for the Council. We want to see it now set aside those differences and focus on the welfare of the Iraqi people. There will be a challenging period of reconstruction in Iraq ahead. It will be in the longer-term interest of us all to see the United Nations itself fully engaged. The United Nations has the experience to contribute and to help define the international architecture for the delivery of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. Member States will expect the Council to work cooperatively to facilitate United Nations involvement.

New Zealand will, of course, work with others in the United Nations to assist with this humanitarian and reconstruction response.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to inform the Council that the present meeting could continue until 9 p.m. unless the remaining speakers follow the example of the representative of New Zealand. I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of India.

Mr. Nambiar (India): I shall try. This meeting will represent the first open debate in the Security Council on Iraq since the outbreak of hostilities on 20 March 2003. We thank you for providing the general membership of the United Nations with an opportunity to communicate their views on this most critical issue involving international peace and security.

The situation relating to Iraq has evolved rapidly over the past few weeks. India's position advocating a peaceful resolution of this issue has been consistent and is well known. The peace and prosperity of that region is as vital for India as for any other country, given our long-standing political, cultural and economic ties with the countries of the region.

India recognized the validity of the unanimous decision of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), which provided for the disarmament of Iraq. The resolution also reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Kuwait and the

neighbouring States. Resolution 1441 (2002) provided a stringent regime of inspections designed to meet the international community's desire to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that securing Iraq's cooperation with the inspections process and its compliance with all relevant Security Council resolutions should have been the main focus of the Council's efforts. That, unfortunately, did not happen. As it is, we are now presented with a situation in which some members have decided to proceed unilaterally.

My country received reports of the commencement of military action in Iraq with the deepest of anguish. In the circumstances, we sincerely hope that the military campaign, which was unjustified and avoidable, will be short-lived. We strongly urge that all possible efforts be made to bring hostilities to an early end. We also call upon all parties involved in the war to meet their obligations towards civilians under international humanitarian law. We are concerned about the human lives involved — Iraqi and others. We are also concerned about refugee flows. The international community should ensure that the sovereignty and integrity of Iraq are fully preserved, as should be its secular traditions. Sectarian and ethnic conflict should not be allowed to divide the country. The right of the people of Iraq to determine their political future and to exercise control over their natural resources should also be fully respected.

The Secretary-General has already drawn attention to the increasingly difficult plight of the 1.7 million residents of the city of Basra. We wish to support any effort designed to provide relief to the civilian population of this city and other parts of the country in need of urgent assistance. We also support the decision of the Secretary-General to hold a meeting of United Nations relief agencies today to coordinate humanitarian relief efforts in Iraq.

We have tried to follow the deliberations of the Council on the Secretary-General's proposal to provide humanitarian assistance to Iraq by adjusting the mechanism of the oil for food programme. We believe that approved contracts for supplies to Iraq under the oil for food programme would be the logical priority for delivering immediate assistance to the Iraqi people. The international community must quickly get involved in restoring peace in Iraq and in the eventual reconstruction of the country and in alleviating the plight of its long-suffering people. We urge the Council to display the required unity and collective will to be able to assist the Iraqi people in this endeavour.

India has already announced its willingness to fully participate in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq and its people, which will inevitably be required as a result of the current conflict. Our long-standing friendship with the people of Iraq would demand nothing less of us; we would be happy to discharge our duty in sharing this burden.

One can have differences over the necessity of war, but one cannot have differences about the urgent need for restoring peace. War is sometimes waged unilaterally, but peace must be built together. We call upon all members of the Security Council and, indeed, all Members of the United Nations to remain resolute in their efforts to secure a lasting peace and a stable future for the people of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Poland.

Mr. Stańczyk (Poland): Poland fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union in the present debate. The importance of the item on today's agenda warrants, nevertheless, some additional remarks presenting our national perspective on the issue at hand.

Poland deeply regrets that Iraq has not abided by the provisions of resolution 1441 (2002) and has not voluntarily disarmed, which was a necessary precondition for a political solution to the crisis. Resolution 1441 (2002) provided Iraq with a final opportunity to fully comply with the will of the international community. It also contained a warning of grave consequences in case of non-compliance, based on Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

As we have repeatedly underscored since the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), we had hoped until the last moment that the conflict would be solved by peaceful means and that military action would be undertaken only as a last resort.

The Government of Iraq has, however, decided to disregard the provisions of resolution 1441 (2002) in the same way as it has disregarded over the last 12 years the provisions of numerous resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

Iraq has not implemented its obligations with regard to disarmament, nor has it extended full cooperation to the inspectors of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Investigation Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency. It has failed to destroy its stocks of weapons of mass destruction, the existence of which was confirmed by the United Nations inspectors. By failing to abide by Security Council decisions, particularly those relating to weapons of mass destruction, the regime of Saddam Hussain constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Under those circumstances, the conclusion had to be reached that the peaceful means for the resolution of the Iraqi crisis have been exhausted and the use of force remained the only option. The exclusive responsibility for that state of affairs rests with the Iraqi leadership.

The intervention of the international coalition to force Iraq's implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1441 (2002), adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, is not directed against the Iraqi people. It has been undertaken for the sake of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, which threaten international peace and security. Failure to take action for the effective disarmament of Saddam Hussein's regime would be a serious political and military mistake. It would be tantamount to tolerating breaches of the law and persistent disregard of obligations to the United Nations. It would lead to the further undermining of the authority of the United Nations.

The paramount aim of the international coalition is the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, as well as the establishment of the rule of law in Iraq. The military operation will be terminated immediately following attainment of the set objectives. The Iraqi people will be able to benefit from the country's resources, of which they are the rightful owners. The whole nation and all constituents of Iraqi society will enjoy full rights and will be able to undertake the process of constructing a State based on the principles of self-determination and liberty, without distinction as to political or ethnic background, and thus they will be able to determine their own future. Iraq will be a full-fledged member of the international community and a factor of stability for the whole region. Realizing these objectives is the basic aim of the coalition and international organizations. Poland is ready to actively participate in this process.

For the sake of alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people, no effort should be spared to keep military operations effective and short. We attach great importance to minimizing the humanitarian effects of the military operation, including the migration of large parts of the population. The civilian population will be provided with aid and essential care. This will be the result not only of the efforts of the coalition itself, but of the whole international community. Early involvement of the United Nations in providing such assistance would contribute significantly to reducing the humanitarian impact of the present situation and, at the same time, would send a clear message that the Organization intends to become actively involved in providing necessary assistance for the reconstruction of the country. Our assistance will be the best demonstration of solidarity with Iraqi society.

The ongoing operation is a serious test for the international system of collective security. We expect that the permanent members of the Security Council will overcome existing divisions and will return to the practice of discharging their mandate in a spirit of shared responsibility. We also expect that the parties to the conflict will abide by the norms of international humanitarian law.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): The first Security Council resolution calling for the disarmament of Iraq, resolution 687 (1991), was passed on 3 April 1991. The most recent Council resolution on Iraqi disarmament, resolution 1441 (2002), was adopted unanimously on 8 November 2002. Throughout this 12-year period, we hoped that Iraq would be disarmed peacefully. Sadly, this goal was not achieved.

Like most members of the United Nations community, we too hoped that war could be avoided. As the Secretary-General said on 17 March 2003,

> "War is always a catastrophe — it leads to major human tragedy. Lots of people are going to be uprooted, displaced from their homes, and nobody wanted that. And this is why we had hoped that the Iraqi leadership would have cooperated fully and would have been able to do this without resort to use of force."

We deeply regret that the Government of Iraq chose not to take the final opportunity afforded it under

resolution 1441 (2002), which was adopted unanimously, to fully comply with its disarmament obligations or face serious consequences. The people of Iraq, who have already suffered greatly from their Government's failure to comply with its disarmament obligations over the past 12 years, will suffer the most from this conflict.

Like many Members, we would have preferred that the Security Council had again explicitly authorized military action to disarm Iraq. But the onus was always on Iraq to avoid a war. Given Iraq's long history of flouting Security Council resolutions, Singapore's view was that the Council's inability to reach a new consensus could not be taken as a reason for inaction to disarm Iraq.

We cannot turn the clock back. We can only look ahead. We have to address the immediate challenges in Iraq, and we have to look for lasting solutions. We note that the members of the Security Council have struggled hard to achieve consensus on this issue. We hope that the Council will soon recover its unity on the subject, for the international community expects a great deal from it. As the Secretary-General said only a few hours ago, "the Council, which has now had Iraq on its agenda for 12 long years, must rediscover its unity of purpose".

The immediate challenge is the humanitarian challenge. Here we would like to make four points. First, the oil for food programme must be restarted as soon as possible. Sixty per cent of the Iraqi population is dependent on food rations procured under the auspices of the programme. The World Food Programme has estimated that in the first four weeks of this conflict, 2.1 million people may need emergency assistance. If the conflict becomes protracted, the number of people needing assistance will undoubtedly rise.

We therefore support the Secretary-General's proposals in his letter of 19 March 2003 to the President of the Security Council, and we hope that the Council will be able to reach agreement soon on a resolution that will allow the resumption of the oil for food programme to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, both during and after the hostilities. In that regard, we are encouraged by the reports we have heard of the progress made in this morning's informal consultations.

Secondly, regardless of the duration or outcome of the conflict, emergency relief must begin immediately, with priority given to the worst-affected areas. We are particularly concerned about reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that civilians in the city of Basra may be facing a humanitarian disaster. Urgent measures must be taken to restore basic utilities to the population there as soon as possible. We hope that international humanitarian organizations, including the ICRC, will be able to deploy their staff on the ground as soon as possible.

Thirdly, we support the Secretary-General's call for both sides involved in this conflict to respect international humanitarian law. We believe that these obligations are clear. Both sides have a responsibility to ensure that they are fulfilled.

Fourthly, we are encouraged by the pledges that many countries have already made in support of an international reconstruction programme in Iraq. However, a more pressing concern is the provision of funding for humanitarian relief operations. As the Secretary-General noted in his statement to the Security Council last week, the United Nations appeal for funds currently faces a severe shortfall of nearly $90 million.

Singapore is prepared to do its part, within our limited means, to contribute to any such international humanitarian relief effort. In response to an appeal by the Singapore Red Cross Society for contributions to a fund to help refugees and victims of the war in Iraq, the Government of Singapore has contributed almost half a million Singapore dollars to provide a quick start for the fund. We have also appealed to our citizens to contribute to it.

Finally, we hope that, as soon as the war is over, the international community will come together again to relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people, to rehabilitate their society, to reconstruct their infrastructure and to pave the way for Iraq's reintegration into the global community. The Security Council faces severe challenges in the coming months. We are confident that it will rise to those challenges.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): It is now time for the members of the Security Council to get beyond the acrimony, narrow political ambitions and separate

agendas that have hamstrung the Council in recent months and to seize this opportunity to shoulder their responsibilities. It is time that the members of the Council look to the future for Iraq and the Iraqi people. It is time that the members of the Council focus on what is at stake and provide the guidance that the international community is waiting for on humanitarian needs, long-term reconstruction and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

The Security Council's inability to agree on how to deal with the threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was a great disappointment to Australia and to many other nations — to nations that depend on this body to help maintain international peace and security. Let us be clear. The Council failed the international community; it failed to enforce its own resolutions. The question for Council members today is whether they will allow that situation to gather momentum — to become a trend towards impotence — or whether they can stop the Council from sliding towards irrelevance and can help Iraq get back on its feet after decades of abusive leadership. If Council members do not rise to that challenge, the Council will simply be bypassed by nations that believe the Iraqi people are deserving of their assistance. It is worth observing that the situation in which the Council finds itself is one of its own making, and only its members can set it back on track.

Australia is a part of the coalition to disarm Iraq because we believe an Iraq with weapons of mass destruction represents a grave threat to our security and to international security. Australia hopes that Iraq can be disarmed soon with a minimum of harm to civilians and to coalition forces. Our participation in the coalition is in complete accordance with international law. Existing Security Council resolutions — including resolutions 678 (1990), 687 (1991) and 1441 (2002) — provide authority for the use of force to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and to restore international peace and security to the region.

We are matching our words with actions. We have provided an initial contribution of $17.5 million to United Nations humanitarian agencies, to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to other non-governmental organizations. We have two ships with 100,000 tons of Australian wheat food aid waiting offshore to start deliveries. And Australian navy divers have been helping to clear the port of Umm Qasr of mines, which will allow the safe delivery of humanitarian supplies and equipment.

We will not stop at that. We are already positioned to play our part in longer-term reconstruction work to help Iraq return to its rightful place in the international community. But it is our strong preference that the Security Council play its part. In this, Australia asks the Council to recall the vital and constructive role that the United Nations played in assisting East Timor during its historical transition to independence.

Members of this body have the responsibility to ensure that the greatest possible flexibility is provided to United Nations agencies in Iraq in order to allow them to get their job done. We urge Council members to agree on tools that will allow rapid and effective delivery of immediate humanitarian assistance to Iraq and that will assist in longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. That applies most immediately to resolutions on restoring the oil for food programme and on longer-term reconstruction issues.

We urge Council members to avoid indulgence in narrow, overly legalistic approaches that would tie the hands of the international community with regard to helping Iraq. The Council will bear responsibility for the humanitarian consequences if it fails to swiftly ensure passage of a transitional oil for food resolution.

And we urge Council members to face up to the facts: Iraq is now being disarmed militarily in part because the Council was unable to deal effectively with Iraq. It need not have been this way. If the Council had spoken with one voice — if it had made it clear that Saddam Hussain's cat-and-mouse games would no longer be tolerated — then Saddam just might have recognized that he had no choice but to disarm peacefully. This disunity must not continue. If members allow narrow self-interest to prevent the Council from setting in place useful and effective mechanisms for Iraq's recovery, they will bear a heavy responsibility for consigning the Council — and with it the wider United Nations role — to a marginal place in contemporary history.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Mota Sardenberg (Brazil): I would like to thank the Non-Aligned Movement for its most appropriate initiative of requesting this open meeting. I also wish to express the Brazilian Government's appreciation for the work carried out by the inspectors of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and

Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency under the careful and resolute guidance of Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei.

Scarcely two weeks ago, we expressed to the Council Brazil's commitment to a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis. President Lula da Silva took it upon himself to contact several heads of State and Government involved in the negotiations and addressed a letter to Secretary-General Kofi Annan with a view to promoting a peaceful solution. At the same time, Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim was in touch with many of his colleagues. Unfortunately, those and other initiatives aimed at a peaceful solution did not come to fruition.

At this juncture, Brazil can only profoundly deplore the initiation of military action and, in particular, the fact that force has been used without the express authorization of the Security Council. The Brazilian Government calls for a cessation of hostilities, for restoration of peace and for respect for Iraqi territorial integrity and sovereignty.

As in any armed conflict, this war will inevitably bring great suffering and desolation to innocent people and will result in an unavoidable toll on human life. In that regard, the Brazilian Government stresses the need for strict observance of all principles of international humanitarian law, in particular those referring to the protection of civilian populations and refugees and to the treatment of prisoners of war.

The present question has acquired a dimension that goes beyond the conflict itself and could have adverse and long-standing effects on the work of the United Nations. The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and it is the only source of legitimacy with regard to the use of force. Peace and security are essential in order to foster economic development and social justice, and the Security Council must be at the centre of that challenge.

In that regard, Brazil reaffirms that the Security Council must be both preserved and strengthened, through conformity with and full enforcement of the resolutions that the Council itself has adopted. It must be preserved and strengthened through the enhancement of its methods of work and through reform that results in a Council that better reflects new global realities, the increased membership of the Organization and the enhanced role of developing countries in world affairs. The immediate question before the Council is how to extend to the Iraqi people the humanitarian assistance so urgently needed. As has been amply reported and reiterated, even before the military intervention, more than 60 per cent of the Iraqi population was dependent on the oil for food programme for basic provisions. Since the initiation of this conflict the situation has certainly deteriorated, and suspension of the programme has made the situation even more dramatic.

Military action without the express authorization of the Council has profound, sensitive, legal and political implications, which must be carefully weighed as the Council works towards the reestablishment of urgent forms of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations.

We are of the view that the humanitarian relief work of United Nations agencies should be promptly resumed and that the coordination of all humanitarian efforts should remain the Secretary-General's responsibility. This is a question that demands an urgent solution.

The Government of Brazil extends its full support to the Secretary-General's efforts to address the situation in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): It is with a profound sense of sadness that the Turkish people receive the news of the ongoing war in Iraq. We pray for an early end and we continue to hope that the loss of life will be minimal. Now, on the carcass of aborted diplomacy, every passing hour describes one truth: that the international community has reason to deeply regret the division which reigned over this Council at that critical moment in history. We are left with a call to parties to uphold the principles of international humanitarian law. We appeal to them to act in accordance with the established practices thereof.

The European Union statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Greece embodies the principles and outlook that would serve us well at this time of profound change and uncertainty. It is with this understanding that Turkey has aligned itself with the position of the European Union.

Turkey sincerely values its intense and multifaceted historical and cultural ties with Iraq and its people. At times like these, time-honoured friends are called upon, first and foremost, to be candid, straightforward and truthful. It is with such feelings that Turkey addresses the Council. Had Iraq cooperated in 1991, this vicious downward spiral would have been avoided and none of its abysmal results would have been set in motion.

Today, the true friends of the Iraqi people say that there is much to regret and much to ponder upon while feeling a sense of loss and dismay.

While this outright conflict is under way, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people is of paramount importance. The oil for food programme, the backbone of United Nations humanitarian assistance to Iraq, should continue uninterrupted. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should be able to fulfil their responsibilities in this regard. Turkey supports the suggestions of the Secretariat for ensuring the smooth functioning of the said programme during and in the aftermath of the present conflict. We think there is every reason, at this time, to follow a pragmatic and flexible approach.

In view of the vast amount of sheer disinformation with regard to Turkey in the context of northern Iraq, I take this opportunity to clarify once more Turkey's concerns and priorities in this matter.

Turkey upholds the territorial integrity, political sovereignty and national unity of Iraq. We will support the decisions reached by the Iraqi people through democratic processes. We wish to see a fully representative system in place in Iraq. Turkey actively supports efforts towards that end, as attested by the recent agreements reached in Ankara.

We believe that the natural resources of Iraq belong to all Iraqis. No desire, not even a sliver of scheming outside these basic parameters, can be ascribed to Turkey. Amateur strategists are having a field day and many do not always speak with good sense and objectivity. Nowhere are they more irresponsible than when they describe the relationship between Turks and Kurds.

Notwithstanding the transparency of our policies and our many declarations on the subject, the people of Turkey are profoundly hurt by the cynical, self-righteous, and at times insulting rhetoric emanating from certain quarters. We are at a loss to understand why such attitudes persist in spite of our repeated attempts at clarification.

We cannot allow another influx of refugees into Turkey to take place, as it did in 1991. We are not convinced by the reasoning offered to explain why such an influx would not happen this time. If it comes to that, any refugee movement should be contained inside Iraq and the people in distress provided with shelter, food and security.

We cannot allow the Kurdish armed terrorists marauding in parts of northern Iraq to abuse conditions of stability and to instigate terrorism and provocation that would set in motion a vicious circle hampering our efforts.

Briefly, we wish to see lasting conditions of stability conducive to widespread and general human and economic development established in Iraq. We do not wish to see instability emerge, sabotaging the efforts to ensure an enlightened way of life, as we and our allies have been working so hard to bring about.

It is common knowledge that elements of the Turkish armed forces are stationed in northern Iraq. They were not sent there yesterday but years before in the context of "Operation Northern Watch", which Turkey allowed to be conducted from its territory in the aftermath of the Gulf war in 1991, and, thanks to which, the Kurds living in northern Iraq received protection and humanitarian relief. We will continue to handle such delicate issues in a manner aimed at dispelling any misunderstandings that might arise under the prevailing conditions in the region.

We have no intention of entering into Iraq. Should that need occur, we will not enter Iraq to fight but to monitor a refugee crisis that might unfold, and to respond to our immediate concerns of security in the vicinity of our borders.

We do not have a concealed agenda. We are enemies of no one and we will not be an enemy for anyone. Turkey is a bastion of stability for those who seek enlightened ends. Those who can resist the detractors of Turkey and can be guided by wisdom will see that they can always find in Turkey a true friend.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): My country notes with profound disappointment that, despite the efforts to disarm Iraq within the framework of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1284 (1999) and 1441 (2002), a military intervention has been launched against Iraq without the explicit authorization of the United Nations Security Council. The withdrawal of the weapons inspectors and United Nations personnel working in connection with the oil for food programme in Iraq has left a gaping hole and provoked numerous expressions of concern which Switzerland wishes to echo here today.

Putting aside differences of views concerning the conditions under which the operation of the coalition forces was launched, the emergency situation that is currently prevailing in Iraq now demands a responsible and united effort on the part of the international community to restore peace, meet humanitarian challenges and assure the well-being and future of the Iraqi people, as well as the reconstruction of their country.

As a High Contracting Party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and in light of its humanitarian tradition, Switzerland reminds the parties to the conflict of the empirical necessity to respect and insure respect for obligations set forth in those instruments. Although neither Iraq nor the United States are parties to the Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, many obligations contained in the first Additional Protocol reflect customary law and apply on that basis.

The main distinction between civilians and combatants and the principle of proportionality are especially important. It is prohibited to use civilians as human shields. Prisoners-of-war must be treated humanely at all times and must be protected in particular against all acts of violence or intimidation, as well as against insults and public curiosity. Switzerland emphasizes that international humanitarian law sets limits to the methods and means of conducting hostilities and that the use of arms that cause excessive injury is prohibited. Moreover, it urges the parties to the conflict to abstain from any use of weapons of mass destruction.

Switzerland strongly supports the appeal of the United Nations Secretary-General to the parties to the conflict to do everything within their power to allow United Nations humanitarian personnel to return to the regions affected by the conflict. This demand is an essential condition for ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid and the protection of vulnerable people. In the immediate future, it is incumbent on the States directly active in the war effort to take responsibility for the urgent needs of the civilian population.

Switzerland underlines the importance of a clear separation between military and humanitarian activities. It is imperative that the latter be guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. Switzerland also stresses that efficient coordination must be ensured between the coalition forces and humanitarian organizations.

Switzerland appeals to the parties to the conflict to ensure access by the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) to people in need of protection and aid. The impartial and neutral activities of the ICRC must be facilitated.

Furthermore, my country demonstrated its commitment and its concerns with regard to the humanitarian consequences of this conflict even before hostilities broke out by organizing a humanitarian meeting on Iraq in Geneva on 15 and 16 February this year. Given the events on the ground, Switzerland has taken the initiative to convene on 2 April in Geneva the first meeting of the Humanitarian Issues Group Iraq.

The Swiss authorities are concerned about the direct consequences of the conflict on supplies to civilians and encourage the Security Council to continue today's efforts to reactivate the oil for food programme without delay in a form that takes due account of the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

The United Nations must assume its indispensable role in reaching a settlement — without delay — to the Iraq crisis, one that is acceptable to the whole international community. The United Nations must not be used as a tool or marginalized in this task. It must resume its central role at the earliest opportunity. The United Nations has an essential mission to fulfil, in particular in the coordination of humanitarian aid and in the restoration of the full sovereignty of Iraq. Such sovereignty must be re-established both at the political level, according full respect to the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, and at the economic level, acknowledging that the resources of the country are the property of the people of Iraq and theirs alone.

Hence, Switzerland solemnly appeals to the members of the Security Council to overcome their differences and together to reassume their principal responsibility, which is to maintain international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Sudan.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, I want to greet you and your brotherly country as you preside over the Council at this dangerous juncture. We fully trust that, with your wisdom and ability, you will lead our ship through the storm to safe port.

We also wish to pay tribute to the Council members who refused to go along with the logic of war and who resisted every attempt to render war legitimate. Those commendable efforts did not, of course, prevent the outbreak of war, but they will remain in the annals of history as proof of the primacy of principle and the fact that the force of logic holds sway over the logic of force.

My delegation reaffirms the resolution of the League of Arab States adopted at its foreign ministers' meeting in Cairo recently. The resolution unambiguously condemned the Anglo-American aggression against Iraq and called it a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and of the principles of international law. We would like to reaffirm this resolution of the League of Arab States. It demands that the foreign forces of invasion be withdrawn immediately and unconditionally. It also demands that the aggressors bear material, legal and moral responsibility for the aggression. We reaffirm this resolution, because we believe that all the arguments adduced in support of using force are vain and invalid. We have always advocated wisdom here and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We are aware of the evils and shortcomings of the other option, and we see now that everything supports what we said.

It now appears that the war will go on, that it will take a long time, as admitted by those who are waging it. And now it seems as if the suffering of innocent civilians — men, women, children and the elderly — is going to be even worse. I would like to refer to this morning's bombing of civilians at dawn in Baghdad where many innocent people were killed.

We expect that the Council will soon take the necessary measures to restore international peace and security in Iraq. We also expect the Council to fully shoulder the burden of responsibility to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, as provided for in the United Nations Charter.

We repeat our appeal for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Iraq, to prepare for a more active part to be played by the Security Council, and for the inspectors to return, resume and conclude their task.

We call upon the international community to rise above present differences, as the possibility of a dreadful humanitarian tragedy looms before us. This has been proven in the reports of the World Food Programme and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The tremendous world solidarity manifested in all the mass demonstrations against the war that have taken place and continue to be held in the world's largest cities, and the sincere appeals of the religious leaders of every faith and creed, should lead to an international consensus based on respect for the Charter. This document, the Charter, which we have all agreed to uphold as our supreme guide, must not be allowed to become merely a small blue booklet that is selectively invoked or ignored as seen fit.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): Murphy's Law applies to this particular case. What the whole international community has breathlessly feared has happened. The war against Iraq has entered its seventh day. It is deeply deplorable that the worldwide protests and tireless efforts by many Member States and members of the Security Council have failed to bring about a solution that could have helped to avoid the tragedy.

It is sad to learn of human casualties and destruction under the winds of war. The Vietnamese have an old saying: "Tears always flow downward", to describe the pains and the agony of parents who lose their children. We therefore fully understand the agony and pain of the parents on both sides of the war who have lost their sons and daughters and their nightmares, which last as long as the war endures. It is even sadder to look at the wounded Iraqi children lying in hospitals, who never expected to end up there after so much

suffering during 12 years of sanctions. I believe that they would ask, why they, of all the people, always fall victim to the mistakes of grown-ups.

The use of force against an independent, sovereign State and Member of the United Nations constitutes a gross violation of the Charter and the fundamental principles of international law. It also renders the United Nations ineffective and sets an extremely dangerous precedent in international relations. We believe that the unilateral and pre-emptive military actions against Iraq will not help to resolve the world's complex problems or ensure its security. It increases the risk of further spreading misunderstanding, radicalism and spiralling violence in the Middle East. The outbreak of sheer force of arms in this already volatile region can only exacerbate the tensions and fractures that fuel terrorism. Viet Nam is opposed to the war against Iraq, as the statement by the spokespersons of the Foreign Ministry and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam made crystal clear on 20 March 2003.

War is always a death sentence for peace. We join our voice with others who call for an immediate end to the military actions against Iraq. This fait accompli demands a swift response from the international community in the field of humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people. As the supplies of essential necessities, on which 60 per cent of the Iraqi population depend, are reported to be running very low, the oil for food programme should be resumed swiftly. It is imperative for the United Nations to shoulder the responsibilities of coordinating the international efforts to help the Iraqi people to overcome the dire consequences of war and rebuild their country. The people and Government of Viet Nam are ready to take an active part in that collective endeavour.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Jamaica.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): I wish to thank the members of the Security Council for convening this open debate at the request of the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, acting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. This is a critical time for the world community. We are involved with the question of war and peace, an issue that can affect the survival of all of us. The Security Council has the onerous responsibility, under Article 24 of the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the international community. It is a responsibility from which it must not resile and its task is to find answers, however difficult or complex the problem may be.

It is a matter of profound regret for Jamaica that military action against Iraq was initiated by a trans-Atlantic coalition on Wednesday of last week. Jamaica has emphasized all along the importance of Iraq's fulfilling its obligations. Indeed, Jamaica will always insist that every Member State, not only Iraq, must comply with resolutions of the Security Council. Nor will Jamaica ever condone the so-called right of any country to develop weapons of mass destruction, engage in acts of repression against its citizens or support terrorism.

But we have expressed our view, and we hold to it, that there was a viable alternative to war — the way of peaceful disarmament through an inspections process that had not been exhausted. Regrettably, there was resort to the use of force and what we are seeing now are the harsh realities, death and destruction caused by military conflict. We have seen in vivid detail a powerful demonstration of sophisticated technology and the destructive power of modern weaponry. The aerial bombardment of Baghdad, the wailing sirens and the thunder of explosions have no doubt succeeded in producing fear and trepidation especially among civilians in Baghdad. We fear that this may be just the beginning. The scars of war run deep and generations of Iraqis will bear them, as will generations of Americans and other citizens of the international community. We deeply fear the prospect of a humanitarian disaster from a siege of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities and from the consequences of continued fighting.

In the circumstances, as the Secretary-General has emphasized, a heavy responsibility for the protection of the civilians lies in the hands of the belligerents and occupying Powers to ensure that loss of life and suffering among the civilian population is kept at a minimum. In this process, the role of the United Nations is twofold. First, it must insist that humanitarian aid is provided for the Iraqi victims of this war. Secondly, it must exert its influence to bring about a ceasefire to end what could become the massacre of innocent Iraqis.

Jamaica believes that it is never too late for peace. We therefore urge the Security Council to

remain engaged and to take bold steps to achieve a cessation of hostilities and to spare the peoples of the world the horrors of continued war.

The nations that have undertaken military action in Iraq are countries with which we are bound by ties of history and shared values of freedom. That very friendship, which we highly value, obliges us to make heard today our small voice for peace. This is a time for a sincere, bold and unequivocal search for peace to save the lives of combatants and the innocent, to stop the possible spread of war and to secure mankind's future in this troubled world. Our position is rooted in a deep commitment to the cause of peace, and comes with a heavy sense of sadness about the outbreak and consequences of war. It also comes from a concern about the implications for the future of the multilateral system and for the realization of ideals of collective security under the Charter, the rule of law and our collective search to achieve a higher destiny for mankind.

Beyond what is happening in Iraq today, and transcending the specific circumstances, there is a challenge for all of us. It is a challenge to ensure that the collective wisdom of the United Nations, and of the Security Council in particular, not be eroded by the will of the mighty. The Security Council must remain the source of legitimacy for any collective action, and it should not be compromised or undermined by any new doctrines or policies inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

At this critical juncture, we urge the Security Council to remain active and to continue to seek ways and means to restore peace and address the humanitarian emergency in Iraq, based on unity of purpose and in accordance with the high ideals and principles of the Charter. That must always be our guide.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on whom I now call.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): My Government deplores that diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving and implementing Security Council resolutions on the disarmament of Iraq were prematurely and arbitrarily aborted, and that a sovereign member of this Organization has become subject to an outright invasion. We believe that there was no justification for departing from the diplomatic path; neither is there anything that could possibly justify the invasion of Iraq.

The unilateral war against Iraq does not meet any standard of international legitimacy. It is not waged in self-defence against any prior armed attack. Nor, even by any stretch of imagination, could Iraq, after 12 years of comprehensive sanctions, be considered an imminent threat against the national security of the belligerent Powers.

It is also evident that the war was in no way authorized by the Security Council. Quite to the contrary, the latest round of diplomacy in the Council clearly demonstrated that the clear majority of the members, including the majority of the permanent five, were either steadfastly against or clearly unwilling to support the draft resolution that would have authorized war.

By the same token, the implementation of Security Council resolutions cannot be advanced as a justification to resort to war. It is true that 12 years have elapsed since the Security Council set out the obligations of the Iraqi Government with respect to disarmament. And it is equally true that Iraqi officials had yet to clarify a number of relevant outstanding issues. But it was for the Council to make that determination and decide on the proper course of action. In fact, the Council and the international community, on whose behalf it operates, implicitly or explicitly objected to mandating any Power to selectively enforce Security Council resolutions. Nor can it be argued that the United States and its allies drew legitimacy from the fact that they were the victims of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. If any thing, the United States was a major culprit behind Iraq's acquisition and unhindered use of these weapons in the 1980s.

That is why this war has received almost universal condemnation. Moreover, the stated goal of regime change in Iraq runs flagrantly counter to the norms and principles of international law; and so does the concept of arbitrary pre-emptive strike, which openly negates the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Democracy is not something that can be taken to societies by tanks and helicopter gunships. The Iraqi people may resent their Government but, as they have shown in the past several days, they do not accept their liberation through foreign occupation. The world, the people in our region and the Iraqis have not

forgotten that those who now want to impose democracy on Iraq at gunpoint have had a well-known record of supporting and sustaining dictatorship there and elsewhere.

The blind support provided to Israel — which has not only flouted the decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly for decades but, in fact, has a record of repression and murder that is second to none — is yet another instructive case of the seriousness of claims calling for the enforcement of Council resolutions, liberation and democracy.

The grave consequences of this war on regional and global stability have already been underlined by various speakers and by my delegation on previous occasions. In addition, my country, which shares long borders with Iraq and is dangerously close to the theatre of hostilities, has not only received refugees but in fact rockets and missiles from both sides of the hostilities, some of which have landed in population centres. I must register here my Government's strongest protests and underline the imperative of taking remedial and preventive measures by the belligerents.

United Nations Member States have frequently warned that the undermining of international law will sooner or later come back to haunt the very authors of such practices. The parading of prisoners of war before television cameras is in fact in contravention of the relevant Geneva Convention. Iraq and the United States have both violated the Convention, and should stop their violations. This instance clearly shows that all countries, be they big or small, benefit from the principles of international law. Undoubtedly, the provisions of international law should be promoted and enforced in their entirety. Selectivity is not only unacceptable, but is in fact dangerously impractical.

My Government is concerned over the extensive aerial bombardment and artillery shelling that is resulting in the death and suffering of Iraqi civilians and in the deteriorating situation in Iraqi population centres. All indications suggest that a humanitarian crisis looms ahead. The humanitarian situation in Basra, which is indicative of what may soon happen throughout Iraq, is an especially grave cause for concern. My Government has made preparations to assist Iraqi civilians, in cooperation with multilateral institutions. However, under the Fourth Geneva Convention, it is clear that the countries that have resorted to war have to shoulder the full burden of meeting the humanitarian and protection requirements of Iraqi civilians, and must be accountable for the welfare and the safety of the people.

At the same time, it is imperative that the future well-being and the immediate humanitarian requirements of the Iraqi people not be decided unilaterally outside the framework of the United Nations. We concur with the Secretary-General that the guiding principles in the work of the Council and the Organization on this issue should be respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity and political independence of Iraq, as well as the inalienable right of the Iraqi people to self-determination and to sovereignty over their natural resources.

While we need to tackle the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Iraq, it is not acceptable that the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should fail to consider the conflict itself, which is the cause of the humanitarian and political catastrophe that is unfolding in our neighbourhood. Thus, the Council has an obligation to address forthwith the breach of peace that is unfolding in Iraq. The international community expects this Council to live up to its obligations and call for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea deeply regrets that Iraq's non-compliance with its disarmament obligations has led to the current situation.

Over the past 12 years, Iraq has repeatedly refused to comply with its disarmament obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions. Iraq's record of compliance with its obligations has been dismal. The initial deadline for Iraq's disarmament was flatly ignored and the subsequent resolutions, as many as 17 over the 12 years, have all been met with Iraq's persistent refusal to comply.

We believe that Iraq has been given more than enough time and opportunities to disarm. Since Iraq has failed to comply with its disarmament obligations for the past 12 years, we cannot but conclude that Iraq has had no genuine intention to disarm. If Iraq today

faces the serious consequences of which it was warned in resolution 1441 (2002), it has no one but itself to blame for failing to take advantage of the time and opportunities provided.

Under these circumstances, the coalition action by the international community should be construed as last-resort, but inevitable measures taken after the exhaustion of all possible diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue peacefully.

With the hostilities now unfolding, we are deeply concerned over the plight of the innocent Iraqi people who may suffer directly from the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Given the magnitude of the conflict, it is urgent for the international community to take necessary measures to meet the acute humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, expeditiously providing key humanitarian supplies, in particular food and medicines.

The Republic of Korea fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to facilitate humanitarian assistance and relief for Iraq through the necessary adjustments to the oil for food programme, as envisaged in his recent letter to the President of the Security Council. For its part, the Republic of Korea will provide humanitarian and other assistance, including refugee relief, to Iraq, as well as economic support for Iraq's neighbouring countries.

We sincerely hope that the ongoing hostilities will come to the earliest possible conclusion with minimum casualties, particularly among the civilian population, and that peace and stability can be restored to the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Sir, for convening this emergency meeting.

On Monday, 24 March 2003, the Foreign Ministers of the League of Arab States adopted a resolution condemning the Anglo-American military action against Iraq, deeming it to be an act of aggression, a violation of the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, a breach with international legitimacy, a threat to international peace and security and a defiance of the international community and world public opinion.

The unilateral military action undertaken by the United States and the United Kingdom lacks any moral and legal foundation. This has been reflected in the views of the majority of the members of the Security Council, of popular international and regional positions, and of Christian and Islamic organizations around the world, all of which oppose this military action and call for its end and for the immediate withdrawal of the invading forces from the territory of Iraq.

At the Security Council's meeting on 19 March, the overwhelming majority of Council members expressed the opinion, first, that, on the basis of assertions made by representatives of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the means for the peaceful disarmament of Iraq had not yet been exhausted. Regrettably, those agencies were withdrawn from Iraq without being given sufficient time to discharge their mandates. Secondly, the Security Council also considered that resolution 1441 (2002), adopted unanimously, does not permit automatic resort to force. Moreover, the pretext of political regime change in Iraq to justify this military action is a violation not only of that country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, but also of the basic principles of the United Nations Charter, especially Article 2, paragraph 4, which prohibits States from "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State".

It is worth recalling here the denunciation — made by the heads of Arab States in the 1 March resolution adopted at the Sharm el-Sheikh summit — of attempts to impose changes on the region or to intervene in its internal affairs. The Arab heads of State considered that the affairs of the Arab nation and the development of its systems of governance shall be decided by the people of the region in accordance with their national and pan-Arab interests, free from any foreign intervention.

The invocation of the right to self-defence is an invalid argument, since Article 51 of the Charter recognizes the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence only if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations — a condition that is not met in this case. We must recall Iraq's affirmation at the Beirut summit last year of its commitment to respect the independence, sovereignty, territorial

integrity and security of Kuwait in order to guarantee against any repetition of the events of 1990. We should also note Iraq's effective cooperation with IAEA, which declared it free of nuclear programmes and weapons, and with UNMOVIC, which asserted that, after four months of inspections, it had found no weapon of mass destruction or prohibited programmes in Iraq.

The unilateral military action undertaken by the United States of America and the United Kingdom is beginning to unleash environmental, economic and humanitarian catastrophes in Iraq that threaten the entire Middle East. Moreover, the instability resulting from this military action has become a danger to the system of international peace and security.

For all those reasons, the Security Council is called upon today to do its utmost to control the current crisis in Iraq and to ensure the return to a peaceful approach to the verification of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction on the basis of relevant Council resolutions. The Council must also take the necessary measures to put an end to the current military action and to bring about the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of American and British forces from Iraqi territory so as to preserve the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and to restore the Council's authority in decisions on questions of international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, to which the international community is fully attached.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Hachami (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend to you, Mr. President, our profound thanks for your prompt response to the request of the League of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement to hold an urgent meeting of the Security Council on the grave and serious developments that the brotherly country of Iraq has witnessed since the outbreak of the conflict.

This war has erupted despite the multiple international appeals regarding the importance of finding a peaceful settlement to the question of Iraq that could be accepted by all parties and that would reflect the aspirations of all Member States of the United Nations. Through many international and Arab efforts, Tunisia has sought to contain the crisis and to find a settlement within the framework of international legitimacy and the United Nations in a way that ensures the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq and spares the Middle East more tension and instability.

Since war is now a fait accompli, His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, has expressed his deep regret and concern over the grave and adverse impact that this conflict will have on the brotherly people of Iraq and on the Middle East as a whole, because the conflict will increase the perils and risk of instability. It comes at a time when all the people of the region are in dire need of security and peace so that they can devote their energies to reconstruction, development and the establishment of good, cordial relations with one another.

Tunisia calls on all international parties to work to contain the present conflict, to overcome its adverse impact and repercussions and to return to a peaceful approach to dealing with the issues pending. That way, the people of Iraq and the region will be spared further catastrophes, particularly in the light of the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of the Israeli attacks on the Palestinian people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful to the League of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for requesting this open debate at a moment of such importance and seriousness, and to you, Mr. President, for convening the meeting without delay.

The position of my country has been clearly stated in three previous debates. Argentina deeply regrets that after 12 years it was not possible to achieve the disarmament of Iraq by peaceful means and that the Government of Iraq did not extend its full, immediate and unconditional cooperation, as required by resolution 1441 (2002), which was adopted unanimously by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on 8 November 2002. Argentina also deeply regrets that a divided Security Council was not able to find within the provisions of the Charter and its own resolutions a peaceful solution to the crisis. It regrets even more the armed conflict and the humanitarian catastrophe looming over Iraq.

We have always said that the use of force is the last resort, once all peaceful means have been exhausted, and that within the United Nations system it must be authorized by the Security Council. Nevertheless, we believe that given the present situation, legal and political debate on the legality of the armed conflict will once again divide and paralyse the Council and divert it from what we understand should be the priority of the moment: the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people. With millions of potential victims of catastrophe because of a lack of essential elements, we believe that it would constitute a lack of sensitivity and a failure of the multilateral system if the Council were to look only to the past and failed to assume its important responsibilities in the present.

The actions of the United Nations and, in particular, of the Security Council must be directed at enabling humanitarian organizations to provide medicines, food and whatever else becomes necessary and, if need be, to facilitate the opening of humanitarian corridors. We urge all parties to cooperate in this objective and, as far as possible, to prevent military actions from impacting on the civilian population and on civilian facilities. This position does not in any way prejudge the legality or legitimacy of the armed conflict. It is aimed only at giving the necessary protection to the civilian population in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. In that context, Argentina especially appreciates the work carried out with great dedication by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent.

This is why, in these tragic circumstances, we support the initiatives of the Secretary-General to adapt the oil for food programme to the present exceptional circumstances. This does not imply a value judgement of the facts that make such changes to the programme necessary. It neither legitimizes nor condemns the use of force. We believe that the Security Council must give the Secretary-General the necessary authority and flexibility in this context to act to mitigate the needs of the Iraqi people.

As was very appropriately expressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic, Mr. Carlos Ruckauf, to the Secretary-General, and as stated in the letter I myself sent to the President of the Security Council on 20 March 2003, Argentina reiterates its willingness to participate in humanitarian tasks to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

In the eyes of world public opinion, the Security Council was not able to prevent the armed conflict. We cannot allow the Council now to be perceived as the obstacle to humanitarian assistance. If, in the face of the daily tragedy of millions of innocent Iraqis, the Council is paralysed or fails to act with the determination required by the circumstances, that public opinion might perhaps wonder what use the Security Council is and what use the United Nations is. That would surely be another heavy blow to this already weakened Organization in the eyes of world public opinion. Because Argentina believes that, despite its weaknesses and shortcomings, the United Nations is, and can be to an even greater extent, an appropriate instrument for international peace and security, economic and social development and the protection of human rights, we urge the Council to rise to the level of the responsibilities entrusted to it by Member States and contribute to strengthening this common enterprise.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Mauritius.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): We would, first of all, like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement this morning, and I would like to say that we agree with his statement.

In the statement that I made during the public meeting of 19 February 2003, I pointed out that resolution 1441 (2002), adopted unanimously by the Security Council, reflected the will of the international community to see Iraq rid itself of its weapons of mass destruction. At that time, a last chance was offered to Iraq to opt for full compliance with resolution 1441 (2002). Iraq's full cooperation was an essential element in resolving the crisis. Had Iraq respected all its obligations, as mandated by Security Council resolutions, more particularly resolution 1441 (2002), we would not have reached this situation and war would have been avoided.

At the same time, it is recognized that Iraq had made progress recently in its cooperation with the United Nations inspectors, albeit under pressure. That is why we have been of the view that war was avoidable and more time should have been allowed to the United Nations inspectors to complete their work.

Mauritius has also been of the view that any military action against Iraq needed the sanction of the Security Council. During the deliberations that took

place in the Security Council these past weeks, Mauritius and many other countries of the region were hopeful that the Security Council would remain united on this issue. Regrettably, this has not been the case, and we all know the sequence of events that followed, thereby showing the inability of the Security Council to avoid war.

War is always a catastrophe and leads to human suffering. As the Secretary-General himself has pointed out, the current situation is a sad moment for all the Members of the United Nations.

In the face of this human tragedy, it is our hope that the conflict should end as soon as possible, with minimum casualties, especially at the level of civilians. Mauritius calls for immediate action to be taken to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi civilian population. Furthermore, we believe that all prisoners of war on all sides should be treated humanely, in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war.

Mauritius appeals to the Security Council to fully assume its responsibility and to do its utmost to deal with the crisis in a manner that will restore its credibility and uphold its dignity.

In conclusion, we would like to say that the Government of Mauritius stands ready to participate in its very modest way to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq, and in that connection, it has set up a solidarity fund for the Iraqi people, the proceeds of which will be channelled through the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Ivanou (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We have become convinced yet again that history only teaches us that it teaches nothing.

Today we are witnessing armed aggression against a sovereign Member State of the United Nations, which had been planned well in advance and launched in circumvention of the authority of the Security Council, with which it is empowered under the Charter.

To our deepest regret, the efforts undertaken by peace-loving nations proved insufficient to avert war. The position of the international community was completely ignored, and the process to settle the Iraqi issue through political and diplomatic means under the aegis of the United Nations was disrupted.

The President of the Republic of Belarus, its Government and the entire Belarusian people condemn the aggression against Iraq. We resolutely oppose any unilateral attempts to enforce systems of administration and governance upon peoples of the world. Bombers and missiles cannot serve as means for delivery of humanitarian aid.

Belarus is very well aware of the horrible toll taken by war. During these tragic days the Iraqi people can rely on our full support.

The use of force as a last resort constitutes an exclusive prerogative of the Security Council, disregard for which leads to the undermining of the existing world order and the diminishing of the norms of international law.

The Republic of Belarus calls upon the Security Council to immediately stop the aggression and prevent further unjustified civilian casualties.

As a United Nations founding Member State, Belarus insists that an adequate assessment be made of the military action and urges our Organization to reassert at this critical moment its direct responsibility for the maintenance of peace and the rule of law.

Resolution of the Iraqi issue, in conformity with the objectives of the United Nations, can only be attained through peaceful means based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and the sovereign right of the Iraqi people to independently choose its own path of development.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Japan.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting.

Japan has consistently sought a peaceful solution to the problem of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction through international coordination and has exerted its own diplomatic efforts, including the dispatch of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to Iraq.

Weapons of mass destruction are terrible weapons that indiscriminately kill and maim civilians in large numbers. We must seriously consider the situation in which such inhumane weapons are in the hands of a dictator who represses his own people. In today's

world, the question of whether or not one possesses weapons of mass destruction is not something that can be left unanswered.

Japan has stressed that the Security Council must act in unity and fulfil its responsibility for the peace and security of the world. It is regrettable that the Security Council ultimately could not reach a common view and thus failed to stand united.

However, we could not leave this problem unresolved forever. That is because, in the course of 12 years, Iraq has time and again violated 17 Security Council resolutions. Although the international community gave it repeated opportunities for a peaceful solution, Iraq made no effort to seize such opportunities and repeatedly violated Security Council resolutions. It also failed to take the final opportunity afforded by resolution 1441 (2002) and, to the very end, refused to respond to the earnest efforts of the international community. Although it was clear that Iraq alone held the key to peace, it closed the way to peace through its own actions. Iraq did not demonstrate that it was fundamentally changing its attitude.

In no situation is it easy to make a decision to support the use of force. It goes without saying that the best way would be for weapons of mass destruction to be dismantled without armed conflict. However, in a situation where that is impossible, Japan has come to the conclusion that, as a responsible member of the international community, it supports the actions taken by the United States and its coalition partners.

It is Japan's heartfelt hope that the combat will be concluded at the earliest possible time, with the minimum casualties, and that the threat posed by Iraq to the international community will be removed. We also find it essential that Iraq be rebuilt as soon as possible and that its people be enabled to live peacefully in a free and prosperous society. Toward that end, it is important that the international community cooperates in supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq. Japan, for its part, will address that issue actively.

Japan is deeply aware that anxiety about the future of the Middle East is mounting because of the military actions being taken against Iraq. Now is the time for Japan to undertake further efforts on behalf of peace and stability in the region.

In accordance with that basic policy, Japan has decided to provide humanitarian assistance, including aid for refugees and assistance for neighbouring countries, totalling approximately $112.53 million. Specifically, it has announced assistance to be provided through international organizations, at $5.03 million; assistance through Japanese non-governmental organizations, at $3.3 million; assistance through the Japan International Cooperation Agency aimed at strengthening the emergency medical care system; and humanitarian emergency personnel and material assistance based on Japan's international peace cooperation law. Japan has also decided to extend $100 million in grant aid to Jordan and $4.2 million in food aid to Palestinian refugees through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Moreover, Japan will strengthen its efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East and will promote measures such as dialogue and exchanges with the Islamic world.

Japan strongly hopes that the international community will focus on the tasks that lie ahead and that the United Nations, including the Security Council, will be united in its efforts to restore peace and stability in Iraq and the surrounding region. Japan, for its part, will contribute actively to ensuring that the United Nations carries out the primary functions expected of it so that solutions can be found to the various challenges facing the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Kerim (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): At the outset, I should like to express our deep regret that the Security Council was not able to achieve a consensus on Iraq. The Republic of Macedonia consistently supported Council members in their search for an agreed way forward towards achieving the objective of the immediate, full and unconditional disarmament of Iraq, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1441 (2002).

Unfortunately, the Iraqi regime did not comprehend the seriousness of the situation and failed yet again to fulfil its obligations to disarm, disregarding the demands of the international community. If Iraq had made a real effort to cooperate in substance during the past 12 years — especially in the light of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002),

which provided a final opportunity for peaceful disarmament — it would have been possible to avoid the current situation. The action that is being led by the "coalition of the willing" represents the last resort, and it is in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The energy of the Security Council must now be focused on the humanitarian aspect of the Iraqi crisis. The current divisions and disagreements among Council members must be immediately resolved in order to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi population. We support the plan aimed at continuing and adapting, in a manner consistent with the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General, the oil for food programme, which must be provided with adequate authorization to ensure the rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance in Iraq. Failure to take action under these circumstances will only further exacerbate the situation on the ground.

The Secretary-General stressed the necessity of respecting the territorial integrity of Iraq and "the right of the Iraqi people to determine their own political future and control their own natural resources". We fully share his view on this issue. Iraq's territorial integrity must be fully preserved, and sovereignty should be restored as soon as possible to the people of Iraq, who alone are entitled to decide their future. The international community's help and support will be essential for Iraq in the days to come. The United Nations sanctions must be lifted as soon as possible and followed immediately by an international reconstruction programme.

In conclusion, as we have stated in the Security Council's previous open debates on this issue, we urge Council members to seek the broadest possible consensus on achieving objectives with regard to Iraq. The possibility of a huge humanitarian crisis in that country makes it even more imperative that the Council's effectiveness and unity be restored.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Giraldo (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia decided to speak in this open debate because of the obvious urgency of providing to the Iraqi people, as soon as possible, the humanitarian assistance that it requires at this difficult time.

Leaving aside considerations about what occurred in the Security Council and on the international stage during the past three weeks, the Government of Colombia believes that what is fundamental today is that we try to prevent the past from distorting our current and future obligations, which are to make less difficult the conditions in which the Iraqi people are living and, later, to work on rebuilding the nation.

In a communiqué dated 17 March, Colombia urged the United Nations to provide the Iraqi people with the humanitarian assistance required at every stage of this crisis. We also urged the international community to contribute to the objective of opening up new progress and development opportunities for the Iraqi people, in a democratic environment and with full guarantees of their fundamental rights and freedoms. That was stated by President Uribe Vélez when, in a message to the Colombian people, he said, "International action must protect civilians and respect the democratic rights of the people of Iraq".

It is essential that the Security Council and the United Nations take up the issue of Iraq to provide the assistance required by the people in terms of humanitarian aid and the rebuilding of the country. We must prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, brought about by hunger, that might arise in the coming weeks.

Colombia urges all Security Council members to put an end to the debate of the past three weeks and to concentrate on real aspects of life and sustenance for the Iraqi people, such as providing humanitarian assistance, ensuring the continuation of the oil for food programme, giving priority to such supplies and permitting the required funding for all these tasks. It is essential that the draft resolution currently being discussed in the Council provide the Secretary-General with the necessary authority and flexibility to move this work forward. It is urgent that the draft resolution be adopted as soon as possible.

Later, we will be able to — and will have to — discuss all the legal aspects of the current situation, and the arguments of Member States will surely serve to guide us in future crises and in similar situations. But today, our principal concern must be to rise to the ethical demands of our time. In the past, war theoreticians and practitioners spoke of the scorched-earth policy and its deadly consequences. Today, how things have changed. Humanitarian aid, promoted by all, is entirely the opposite, since it seeks to make

conditions less distressing and to protect lives during and after confrontations. Let us stop the verbiage and return to the human aspect. The requirements of humanitarian assistance mean we must act and we must act quickly. Let's clear the way for the United Nations to make this vital contribution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Adamia (Georgia): Let me express deep concern over the current situation in Iraq, in particular its humanitarian implications. We are saddened that the coalition was compelled to use force as a last resort to address the Iraqi regime's non-compliance, for over 12 years, with the demands of Security Council resolutions and the resulting serious consequences, including those of a humanitarian nature. This is yet another example of the consequences that could be brought about by the practice of ignoring Security Council resolutions aimed at maintaining regional or international peace and security.

Today we are confronted with a humanitarian situation in Iraq that could escalate into a large-scale crisis. In the present circumstances, with the Security Council having tested the mechanism of oil for food to address the humanitarian issues in Iraq, the current humanitarian crisis has no justification.

Notwithstanding differences in political approaches of the Security Council members, the emerging situation in Iraq requires the Security Council to display resolve, in particular, to endorse the proposals presented by the Secretary-General and thereby relieve the suffering of millions of Iraqis.

The Security Council is well able to employ this kind of effective mechanism. In order to meet these needs, we believe that the Secretary-General should be provided with sufficient authority and flexibility to use existing resources and to assemble new resources. The Iraqi people should know that the international community is ready to take far-reaching steps in this respect.

At the same time, along with many other States, Georgia considers it vital to see the effectiveness and unity of the Security Council restored in dealing with this humanitarian issue, as well as all other outstanding issues related to conflict resolution and the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Uzbekistan notes with regret that the non-compliance of the Iraqi regime over the past 12 years with Security Council resolutions, including Council resolution 1441 (2002), has led to the current conflict. Under such circumstances, we can only cherish the hope that the conflict will end as soon as possible with minimum suffering and loss of human life. Uzbekistan strongly favours the disarmament of Iraq. Unfortunately, the latest events in Iraq have destroyed the consensus in the Security Council. From our standpoint, the disagreements which have arisen in the Security Council should not blind us to the main task, which is the need for the complete disarmament of the Iraqi regime, including the threat of chemical and biological weapons in the hands of terrorists.

The humanitarian situation in Iraq is getting worse each day. The international community should take urgent measures to improve this situation, including guaranteeing drinking water, food, electricity and basic necessities for the Iraqi population. In this context, Uzbekistan calls upon the Security Council to continue, as soon as possible, the United Nations oil for food programme in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Iraq which would cause the suffering, first and foremost, of the Iraqi people. The humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people should be met as soon as possible.

In this regard, Uzbekistan fully supports the proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, that he be given authorization to provide urgent humanitarian assistance, on behalf of the international community, to Iraq.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan supports the efforts directed at restoring the effectiveness and unity of the Security Council in settling the situation around Iraq, something which is extremely important for strengthening the authority and universal role and significance of the United Nations in international relations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Jegermanis (Latvia): Latvia has aligned itself with the statement of the European Union; however, we deem it is necessary to express our views

on this critical issue. The situation has completely changed since we last addressed this issue in the Security Council's open debate.

Twelve years of prolonged effort by the international community to disarm the regime of Saddam Hussain by peaceful means have not been successful and diplomatic resources have been exhausted. Latvia regrets that Saddam Hussain has managed to polarize the international community, making any further diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation impossible. The Iraqi regime is solely and exclusively responsible for the consequences of its actions.

On 20 March 2003, the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia took a decision on the support of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), pledging its support and readiness to join the efforts of the international coalition aimed at the disarmament of Iraq.

Latvia believes that everything possible must be done to avoid civilian casualties in the course of military operations. Latvia will offer humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people, take part in the rebuilding of the country and work to eliminate the legacy of totalitarianism.

In order to swiftly handle the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, we support the Secretary General's proposal to exploit the oil for food programme by adjusting it to the new situation. The international community in general, and the Security Council in particular, have to act in unity at this critical moment in order to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe in Iraq.

Latvia will support the involvement of the United Nations in the process of rebuilding and the establishment of a democratic Iraq that is at peace with its neighbours and not in possession of weapons of mass destruction. We are convinced that active involvement of the United Nations during and after the current crisis in Iraq will secure the authority of the United Nations in the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nicaragua.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): During the present international crisis, the Government of Nicaragua has consistently emphasized how important it is for the multilateral system and, particularly, the United Nations Security Council, to shoulder its collective responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, which implies acting as an efficient instrument to carry out timely actions to reinforce the faith in and credibility of the United Nations system.

We are speaking today to reiterate the resolute commitment of the Government of Nicaragua to the international community. The Government of Nicaragua has unambiguously supported all the Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1441 (2002), which was designed to bring about the immediate and unconditional disarmament of Iraq. That country has not complied with that resolution, thus endangering international security.

The present situation is the outcome of Iraq's defiance of the collective will of the United Nations, in particular as expressed in resolutions 678 (1990) and 1441 (2002). Those resolutions underlie the present course of events, which was precipitated by non-compliance with them.

The time has come to revitalize and renew the united and consistent action of the Security Council. We agree with the Secretary-General when he said today that the time has come for the Council to find its singleness of purpose once again.

Nicaragua considers that our Organization should focus its efforts and action on the humanitarian situation affecting the Iraqi people, a people which for many years has been the innocent victim of an oppressive regime. We are concerned about the lack of electricity and drinking water, and particularly the situation of children at risk of illness for lack of hygiene, food and medicine. Also, internally displaced persons who lack the necessary services will depend on the concrete action taken by the Council.

For this reason, Nicaragua believes that it is extremely important for the Security Council to renew the Secretary-General's mandate and adjust the oil for food programme so that humanitarian assistance to Iraq is brought in an efficient and realistic way. The new international situation calls for an updating, a strengthening and an expansion of the spirit and scope of the oil for food programme.

The people of Nicaragua can bear witness to the importance of the United Nations as a decisive factor in the post-conflict era. Looking back on our region, the Council will recall how the United Nations role

helped Central America to come out of the deepest political and socio-economic crisis of its modern history, which required the active and intense presence of the United Nations. Ever since its creation, the participation of the United Nations in the various international conflicts through different and creative mechanisms has been essential to confront humanitarian problems and to assure international peace and security.

We want a dynamic and efficient organization that will secure its central role in the international order. For this reason, Nicaragua would like to emphasize once again the importance of having the United Nations play its historic part in the present humanitarian crisis. Its presence is indispensable in providing immediate humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people.

Nicaragua has been a victim of war and of the pain and suffering in its wake. It is very familiar with the importance of international cooperation and is prepared to provide post-conflict humanitarian assistance that might consist within a legal framework of sending experts in demining and medical assistance to victims.

I would like to conclude by quoting a notable statesman, who said:

> "Winning the war is a task for part of society, but building the peace and bringing about unity is the task of all. None are excluded, and there can be no selfishness."

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): We had hoped that disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction could be done peacefully through a united approach by the Security Council. This was unfortunately not the case.

A major task before us now is to ensure the protection of the civilian population by all parties to the conflict and to alleviate suffering through effective humanitarian assistance. For the longer term, Iraq and the Middle East must be ensured a stable future, based on peace and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

As the war unfolds, the international community must be prepared to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. Norway will shoulder its responsibility by playing an active role in easing the suffering by increasing our humanitarian assistance and participating in the reconstruction of Iraq.

We will continue our close dialogue with the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the Red Cross system. We will also support Norwegian humanitarian non-governmental organizations, already active in the region. In addition to our contributions to meet the acute humanitarian needs, we will also consider assistance towards reconstruction of infrastructure. Norway will contribute in the areas where we have capabilities and competence on the basis of assessed needs and in coordination with others.

There are considerable resources vested in the oil for food programme. Norway joins others in urging the Security Council to keep this programme running, to meet the most immediate humanitarian needs of the population. The oil for food programme should be used to alleviate the growing humanitarian crisis and for reconstruction. In this respect, we would like to appeal to the Security Council to agree quickly on the continuation of the oil for food programme, giving the Secretary-General the necessary authority and flexibility to respond to urgent humanitarian needs.

Iraq is a country rich on resources and human capital and will, no doubt, also contribute to rapid reconstruction once the present conflict is over. It is important that the overall international assistance is coordinated by the United Nations. We welcome the Secretary-General's statement outlining such a role for the United Nations.

If the Security Council is to play its role of safeguarding international peace and security, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter, it is imperative that the unity of the Council is maintained. This must be the lesson learned.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I have already had an opportunity to tell you how grateful my country is to see you presiding over the Council, and I am following your instructions.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, when London was subjected to carpet bombing, it was a time for cries and tears but not for statements and speeches. The war is raging in Iraq, cradle of urban civilization, where the

memory of humanity is captured in the first clay tablets, inscribed with the first alphabet.

War is raging in one of the most sensitive parts of the world — a region where the peace of the world is now at stake. Everybody knows that the highest of all priorities, the one that we should have looked at first, was to give justice to the Palestinians, who have waited more than 50 years for the decisions of the United Nations to be implemented, in order to restore their dignity and to give them the enjoyment of national sovereignty within their own State, with Al-Quds, Jerusalem, as its capital.

The war that is raging today is now being broadcast live and in real time and is being experienced by the entire population, wherever they may be. These populations are witnessing innocent civilians fall victim, women and children, elderly people. Entire families, like those families of Council members or my own, are watching their relatives held prisoner, intimidated, wounded or killed. War today is no longer something you find in experts' reports. It is not literature. It is not a matter of disarmament experts. It is not a matter of referring to one legal provision or another. War is the bitter reality that makes us all doubt whether we have made advances in our ethics, values and humanity.

The Kingdom of Morocco has often addressed the Council, before the hostilities broke out, to call for a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis, which would preserve the credibility of the Council and the values on which the Charter is based.

Force, indeed, should be the last resort, after all other means for a peaceful settlement have failed. As everyone knows, the philosophy that underpins our Organization requires that all States renounce the unilateral use of force and turn to collective security. Today, we wish to reiterate our faith, more than ever, in the values of peace and tolerance that have guided the founding fathers of our Organization. We believe that collective security is the best means of protecting us against the return of the demons of expansionism and domination.

All international and regional groups have spoken on the Iraqi crisis and its consequences, as well as on the hostilities under way. The Kingdom of Morocco, as an Arab and Muslim country and member of the Non-Aligned Movement, has taken part in these discussions and the stances that resulted from them. The council of the League of Arab States met in Cairo 23 March, the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States clearly spoke on this issue this afternoon.

We are here again today before the Security Council, after the international community has failed in all the efforts it has made for several months to promote a peaceful outcome of the Iraqi crisis, in particular by allowing disarmament inspectors to carry out their tasks to completion.

The entire world has its eyes focused on us, as if it were trying to detect some hope through the curtain of smoke and flames that are released from explosives and bombs. Almost 60 years have elapsed since such a hope was proclaimed widely and loudly in San Francisco. The peoples of the United Nations declared their resolve "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", which twice in the space of a lifetime — this was in 1945 — "brought untold sorrow to mankind".

This is what the peoples of the United Nations expect of us today: to save them from the scourge of war and the suffering it causes. It is up to us all, whoever we may be, every Member of this Organization, the powerful and the others, to get down to this task with a sense of urgency. We cannot resign ourselves to the fatality of death, which blindly strikes innocents, to the fatality of destruction of a land where the earliest traces of our shared memory reside, a land where God called on people to allow the spirit to prevail over instinct and passion.

The discussions of the Council today and tomorrow are crucial, because the future of our Organization depends on them and especially of the vision of the world that they embody. What is that vision? It is that people, despite the diversity of their cultures, beliefs and sensibilities, can always find common ground to save themselves from the scourge of war.

Such common ground, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan has reminded the Council just a few hours ago, consists in the respect for the sovereignty, unity and the territorial integrity of Iraq, as well as in the right of this country, and all others, to choose its own political regime, without foreign interference, and to freely exploit its own resources. Finally, respect for humanitarian law allows for neither exception nor reservation. It is an indispensable body of imperative

rules of international law. I know what I am speaking of here.

Similarly, the solidarity of the international community, to alleviate suffering and help the hungry, the sick or disabled, must go beyond all political and other divisions. It is only in this way that we can preserve our humanity.

We must see to it that this crisis, this tragedy, can be an opportunity for a rebirth, a resurgence of the values of peace and tolerance. But this must be done quickly, very quickly. For "the night is long that never finds the day". Shakespeare was a poet, a humanist, who knew that freedom cannot live side by side with domination.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): We are very concerned about the difficult humanitarian situation in Iraq, which has resulted from the dictatorial policies of a regime that acts against its own people and that, even in its final days, has shown a willingness to sacrifice everything, its own people and country, in order to maintain power. As a member of the coalition of the free countries for the liberation of Iraq, Albania requests that this regime step aside now to spare the people of Iraq from being exposed to further danger and suffering.

Any attempt to protect the lost cause of a regime that is responsible for the destitution and death of millions of Iraqis and other people in the region, in the name of state sovereignty and fear of change, is an attempt that not only frustrates the hopes of a people who long for freedom, but also delays our common action to assist the people of Iraq in overcoming their fragile humanitarian situation.

Albania welcomes the initiative of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to take the necessary measures to reactivate the oil for food programme. We call upon the members of the Security Council to fully support the Secretary-General by providing him with the necessary authority and flexibility to meet the humanitarian needs of the people of Iraq.

The adoption without delay of the resolution on humanitarian assistance to Iraq by this body will serve to restore the efficiency and unity of the Security Council, which is imperative, in view of the most recent events.

Now is the time for our nations and the Security Council to focus on the challenges of the future with the will and the necessary pragmatism that make possible our cooperation.

Albania, as part of the coalition of the willing led by the United States and United Kingdom, together with many countries all over the world, will strive to advance liberty and peace in Iraq. The new Iraq will be democratic and will live in peace; it will no longer be a threat to its neighbours or to the world.

By assuming that responsibility and by fighting for a free world that is not threatened by weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, we will remain faithful to the vision of the founders of the Organization and accomplish its goals. As Winston Churchill once stressed,

> "Make sure that the force of right will, in the ultimate issue, be protected by the right of force."

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Venezuela, on whom I now call.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Security Council for supporting the request made by a group of countries with regard to holding this open debate at a crucial moment that casts a shadow on the future of the United Nations and that of humanity.

The current situation necessitates that each of us urgently shoulder our own responsibilities with regard to the situation in Iraq. It also requires that, in the prevailing situation of anguish and frustration confronting us today, we jointly find a solution that restores the hope of the peoples of the world. The peoples of the world and a majority of its Governments have rejected the use of force against the people of Iraq. They also hope that the Security Council and the United Nations will take the right decisions to enable us to overcome the current conflict.

A solution must be based on unity and must respect the guidelines enshrined in the Charter, whose principal and unshirkable mission is to preserve international peace and security and to ensure respect for human rights and the sovereignty of peoples. Today we must give special consideration to the humanitarian assistance necessary as a consequence of the war that has been started.

Last Sunday, the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Hugo Chávez Frías, added the voice of our country to those rejecting war in Iraq and calling for peace. In our most recent statement in the Security Council, which we made on 13 March, we

said that the Iraqi crisis had to be dealt with peacefully and diplomatically. We also said that the solution to the conflict had to be in line with international law, and that it should be achieved through diplomacy based on dialogue and agreement, which is the appropriate way to resolve conflicts between nations.

That implies the full implementation of the resolutions that have already been adopted by the Security Council, as well as compliance with the forthcoming resolutions soon to be adopted by it. We believe that there is still time to avoid even worse evils and that there is still room to find peace. But in order to find peace, the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. It must also categorically reject the use of force. The efforts of the Council must therefore be directed towards achieving an immediate ceasefire. The search for peace must guide its actions. Moreover, in addition to caring for the Iraqi people through the provision of humanitarian assistance, we must also put an end to the use of force.

The best humanitarian assistance we could provide today would be to cease hostilities. That would make it possible to return to the search for a diplomatic solution, thereby avoiding the danger bearing down on humanity. Putting an end to military action should be discussed with the same urgency as is employed in discussions of humanitarian assistance. In this regard, we believe that the Secretary-General must immediately make a statement rejecting the use of force. To that end, the United Nations as a whole, and the Security Council in particular, must play their part and adopt the necessary decision to find a solution to the conflict.

In short, we believe that the Council should reaffirm its adherence to international law; ensure that its decisions are respected; urge all parties to continue diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation in Iraq; protect the right of all Iraqis — including minorities — to live in peace and dignity; and, finally, adopt the decisions necessary to provide urgent humanitarian assistance. That assistance must be multilateral and coordinated and should be provided through existing United Nations mechanisms.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Iceland, on whom I now call.

Mr. Ingólfsson (Iceland): Iceland has aligned itself with the statement made by Greece on behalf of the European Union. In addition, Iceland would like to state the following.

Iceland regrets that Iraq has had to face the serious consequences of military action. This would not have been necessary had the Iraqi regime decided to change its attitude and cooperated immediately, actively and fully, as it was obliged to do under resolution 1441 (2002).

The Icelandic Government has given its political support to the coalition of States assembled for the immediate disarmament of Iraq. This is due to our conviction that action was necessary to ensure the implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions regarding the disarmament of Iraq.

We urge Member States of the United Nations to unite in the work ahead and to secure a full United Nations role in providing humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people and in the post-war reconstruction of their country. The Iraqi people need the full support of the international community to be able to rise again in prosperity, democracy, dignity and peaceful co-existence with their neighbours after decades of dictatorship and aggression.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): I would like, first of all, to thank you, Mr. President, for acceding to the request made by the League of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement to convene this urgent meeting of the Security Council in order to consider an extremely urgent matter, namely, the war in Iraq. I would also like to thank you and all the members of the Council for honouring my request to participate in this crucial debate. During these difficult and painful times, I would like to wish you every success in guiding the work of the Council during this tumultuous month.

My country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, is closely following the question of Iraq. Like the overwhelming majority of peoples throughout the world, we have always advocated a peaceful solution to this sensitive and complex issue. Indeed, we share the deep conviction of all those who have cautioned against the unpredictable and devastating consequences of the use of force to settle this conflict: enormous material damage, extensive loss of human

life and a negative impact on peace and stability in the Middle East and throughout the world.

In spite of the opposition of the vast majority of the world community, on 20 March 2003 a large-scale military attack was launched against the Republic of Iraq, an independent and sovereign country, member of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the United Nations. We deeply regret that the peaceful path that was still open was abandoned and that, unfortunately, the military option was chosen. This unjustified act of aggression, not mandated by the United Nations, is a serious violation of the Charter and of international law.

In its statement issued on 20 March 2003, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic appealed for an immediate end to this armed attack in order to spare the lives of innocent Iraqi civilians. We continue firmly to believe that a peaceful solution to this conflict, however complex, can still be attained within the framework of the United Nations. Let us give diplomacy a chance, rather than continue to let the weapons roar. According to the latest information from the mass media, the number of innocent civilian victims continues to grow. No less seriously, if the war persists, we should expect a major humanitarian crisis, the consequences of which will be catastrophic.

Before the outbreak of the military conflict, some spoke of a quick war. Many are now talking about the possibility of a lengthy war, no doubt fraught with consequences. In this situation, we can only feel the greatest concern and even anxiety. The international community is therefore called upon to take urgent action to put an immediate end to this war, which has already claimed close to 1,000 victims. If the world should succeed in this noble endeavour, we will have rendered a great service to the Iraqi people, whose unbearable sufferings should be ignored by no one.

Following the end of the bipolar era, many people expressed the hope that it would be possible to build a better world. Since then, Governments and peoples throughout the world have given their all and spared no effort to promote cooperation among States in all possible areas. In a word, this multifarious cooperation has already registered important achievements in many spheres. Is this not a trend in our modern history that should be strongly supported? Cooperation yields benefits. All countries and peoples the world over can only welcome it. On the other hand, war or the use force to settle conflicts brings only destruction, misery, death, resentment, anger and hatred. Together, we should do our utmost and persevere in our efforts to ensure that dialogue and cooperation among States prevail in international relations, thereby helping to preserve world peace and security.

These are the thoughts which my delegation wished to share with this Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Mongolia.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): I would like to express my deep appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this timely open debate on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

Mongolia's stance on the issue of the disarmament of Iraq has from the very outset been consistent and prudent. Mongolia has over the years resolutely condemned the production of weapons of mass destruction by the regime of Saddam Hussain, its aggression against neighbouring States and genocide against its own people, and supported all relevant United Nations resolutions and activities. The international community has exerted considerable efforts aimed at resolving the Iraqi issue peacefully. However, the Iraqi regime failed to fully meet its obligations vis-à-vis the United Nations. It is the firm belief of my Government that if the Iraqi leadership had cooperated fully and faithfully and carried out its obligations before the Security Council, the resort to force would have been unnecessary. Thus, the responsibility for the current situation lies with the Iraqi regime.

My delegation shares the view that, at this stage, when the hostilities are in full swing, the humanitarian implications of the war should become the preoccupation of the States Members of the United Nations. With the withdrawal of United Nations personnel from Iraq, the humanitarian oil for food programme has been suspended. The war has further exacerbated the sufferings and hardship of the Iraqi people.

It is time for the international community to look forward, to take immediate and resolute action and to find a way of resuming humanitarian relief to help the Iraqi people. Like many others, the Government and people of Mongolia are deeply concerned by the alarming humanitarian situation in Iraq. We are informed that in the southern city of Basra, over 1.7 million residents have been without water supplies for several days. It has also been stated that epidemics

could very soon spread rapidly because of the hot weather conditions in the region.

Mongolia shares the concerns expressed about the welfare of civilians caught in the conflict, especially children. Urgent efforts should be made to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. It is quite obvious that significant resources will be needed for this purpose. We consider that relieving the suffering of the Iraqi people in a speedy and efficient manner is the immediate task facing the community of nations.

As we understand it, the United Nations has prepared a major contingency plan and would be able to start its implementation as soon as possible. Under these circumstances, the Security Council should take the lead and give to the Secretary-General the mandate for whatever measures he may need to take in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe from happening in Iraq. We urge the members of the Security Council to support the Secretary-General by providing him with authority and flexibility to deal with the emerging crisis. The single-mindedness and resolve of the Security Council on this issue would, hopefully, be a step towards restoring its effectiveness and unity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala has not intervened in the prior debates on this matter. We did, at the time, hail the capacity the Council revealed to bring together support for resolution 1441 (2002). We also noted with mounting concern the divisions that arose around the fundamental question of how to implement it. But we refrained from joining the growing polarization that characterized the positions taken on this burning issue, which gradually transcended the scope of the Council and spilled over to the general membership. Rather, up to the end we nourished the hope that the members of the Council, particularly the permanent members, would find some way of bridging their differences.

Today we are confronting a situation that is altogether different. We understand that it is not realistic to expect this collegial body to look backwards or try to arrest a momentum over which those of us who are not members exert little or no influence. We are fully aware, furthermore, of the risks that would be involved in bringing additional tensions to bear on the sole multilateral body that takes collective decisions on the maintenance of peace. I shall, therefore, confine myself to expressing, with almost telegraphic conciseness, our opinion on three aspects.

First, we are extremely concerned about the humanitarian situation that has arisen in Iraq and in neighboring countries. We would prefer that humanitarian assistance be administered by the United Nations and we unreservedly support the Secretary-General with regard to organizing the provision of assistance to the Iraqi population. We feel that, for now, the programme known as oil for food should continue. We also fully subscribe to the Secretary-General's appeal to the conflicting parties to respect the civilian population, in keeping with international humanitarian law. We agree that, until such time as the United Nations is in a position to act, the exigencies of the circumstances demand that the humanitarian assistance required be provided by the entities that exert control over the affected areas.

Secondly, even though it may be premature to address the post-conflict situation, we think that it will be incumbent upon multilateral agencies, and particularly the United Nations, to play a fundamental role in facilitating a situation in which the Iraqi people themselves make decisions regarding their future. In this respect, we take it as a given that the sovereignty and integrity of the Iraqi nation will not be impaired.

Finally, we reiterate our faith in multilateral agencies and in the unique role of the Security Council. We do not concur with the assessment of some observers who believe that the debate that has taken place within the Council these past few weeks has dealt a mortal blow to that body. This is not the first, nor will it be the last, time that the members of the Council have failed to reach agreement on complex and potentially divisive issues. It would, nevertheless, be naive to think that that debate has not left wounds, even deep wounds, which will require a deliberate effort by all members — I emphasize all — to safeguard the integrity of the Council and preserve this singular body established under the Charter to maintain peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): We had about 78 speakers on our list; 45 have spoken this afternoon. There are still 33 left. Because of the lateness of the hour, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I propose that I suspend the meeting until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m. I would be grateful to those speakers who will take the floor tomorrow to heed the appeal I made about the length of time for speaking. It should be limited to five minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 8.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4726 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4726th meeting

Thursday, 27 March 2003, 9.30 a.m.
New York

President	Mr. Traoré	(Guinea)
Members	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/362)

Letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/363)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-29764 (E)

The meeting resumed at 9.55 a.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Dominican Republic, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Francisco Timos (Dominican Republic), Mr. Al Hasayen (Jordan), Mr. Baraliyev (Kyrgyzstan), Mr. Mahendran (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Gutteres (Timor-Leste) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to reiterate to all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, I repeat, no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): On earlier occasions, we have expressed the opinion that it is the obligation of the Council to exhaust all peaceful means available before resorting to the authorization of the use of force and that only the Council can bestow legitimacy on an armed intervention. We thus deeply regret that military action has been initiated without explicit authorization by the Council. At the same time, we are not of the view that this constitutes a failure of the Council, much less of the Organization as a whole.

As a small State, we are particularly concerned that the Council and international law have been bypassed on a question of such magnitude and believe that this has wider ramifications which will and must be discussed. However, given the very concrete and urgent needs in Iraq, the Council is challenged to engage in very concrete actions at this particular moment. The challenge before the Council today consists in particular of the large-scale humanitarian crisis that is unfolding at frightening speed in Iraq. While international humanitarian law is clear on the responsibility for the civilian population in the current situation, it is also our view that the United Nations must play an essential role in this respect and that humanitarian assistance should be coordinated under its auspices, as soon as the circumstances on the ground allow for such coordination.

Against that background, we thus welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General for an early resumption of the oil for food programme for the benefit of the Iraqi people. We realize that the resumption of the oil for food programme has sensitive political and legal implications. But we do believe that it is the obligation of the Council to place the plight of the Iraqi people at the centre of its considerations and regain quickly its unity, which will also be essential for securing a central role for the Organization in shaping a peaceful future for Iraq, based on the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty. We would be in a very difficult position to explain a lack of unity in the Council with regard to humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people and are therefore encouraged by the progress that was made in consultations on the issue.

The humanitarian situation of the Iraqi population is at the heart of our concerns. The Government of Liechtenstein decided earlier this week to give a total of more than $100,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and an additional contribution may be forthcoming shortly. We are thus ready to contribute to the joint effort of the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

While we can contribute to this end, it is only the warring parties that are in a position to prevent the suffering of the civilian population. The strict observance of international humanitarian law, and the Geneva Conventions in particular, will go a long way towards ensuring this goal. It is the obligation of the parties to the conflict to strictly adhere to all these established standards, in particular those regarding the prohibition to target or otherwise abuse civilians and the obligation to grant full access to humanitarian organizations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We meet at a dark hour. The Government of Canada had hoped that a compromise would be possible and that the Iraqi regime could have been disarmed without recourse to war. But war is here. As a result, our main concern must be the plight of the victims of war.

No one, civilian or soldier, combatant or non-combatant, is immune to the ravages of war. We express our condolences to those who have experienced loss during this conflict.

In this Council, our common humanity compels us to put people first, to focus our energies on protecting them and helping them to meet and overcome the challenges they face in the days ahead. Our first duty is to meet the urgent human needs of the Iraqi people, who have been victimized by the brutality of their own Government for too long.

(*spoke in English*)

The Security Council has on several occasions committed itself to protecting civilians in armed conflict, including in particular women and children at risk. Every effort must be made to avoid civilian casualties. The Council has also emphasized the obligation of parties to a conflict to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations and humanitarian personnel. The Council has underscored the need for safe and unimpeded access to civilian populations at risk. Furthermore, the Council has urged all parties to conflicts, including neighbouring countries, to comply strictly with their obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

We appeal to all concerned to fulfil those undertakings. We particularly appeal to neighbouring countries to do everything in their power to facilitate immediate, full, safe and unhindered access by humanitarian aid agencies to those in need.

We commend the courage and the commitment of humanitarian aid personnel, including those of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations, who are braving the very significant dangers of war to continue their operations in support of the people of Iraq.

We also call upon neighbouring countries to respect international law and to shelter those refugees who have no alternative but to flee across international borders.

We have only begun to see the potential humanitarian implications of the current crisis, including movements of internally displaced persons. And we know that the longer and more destructive the war is, the greater the needs will be. We therefore urge the Council to adapt the oil for food programme without delay. The programme can contribute significantly to meeting the Iraqi people's pressing needs.

Despite the efforts of many inside and outside the Security Council, including Canada, the United Nations was not able to unite to disarm Saddam Hussain. However, we now have another opportunity to find the unity of purpose that eluded us before.

The people of Iraq will soon face the challenge of rebuilding their country in the wake both of inevitably destructive war and of the deprivation and suffering they have endured for years. We believe that the Council must provide the mandate for that reconstruction effort. Furthermore, we believe that the United Nations system as a whole should be centrally engaged and should offer both leadership and its proven expertise in ensuring that the effort to help the Iraqi people rebuild their country is one in which all members of the international community can participate.

I would now like to say a word about the laws of war. We appeal to all parties to respect their obligations under the Geneva Conventions with regard to the conduct of conflict. Prisoners of war must not be used for propaganda purposes. Civilians must not be used as human shields. Schools and hospitals must remain off limits to war.

When I spoke before the Council on 19 February on behalf of the Canadian Government, I urged the Council to keep the welfare of the Iraqi people at the heart of its deliberations. I make that appeal again today. There is no more noble and humane purpose that the Council can now serve than to help the people of Iraq. Canada commits to joining with others in meeting the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people and in working with them to rebuild their country.

In that regard, I am pleased to inform the Council that the Government of Canada has decided to commit approximately $70 million for humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Marshall Islands, on whom I now call.

Mr. Capelle (Marshall Islands): It is my honour to address this open meeting of the Security Council. I would like to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for once again giving small delegations such as my own an opportunity to participate in this crucial debate.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is a country of peace-loving people. Both our people and our lands have suffered from the ongoing effects of weapons of mass destruction. We have witnessed first-hand the absolute devastation that can be unleashed by such weapons. For that reason, we believe that the disarmament of the Iraqi regime is an urgent priority. We also support the ultimate goals of the current operation in Iraq, namely, to ensure Iraqi compliance with its disarmament obligations and to restore the sovereignty of the country to its people.

The devastation of war is becoming increasingly evident to all of us as we watch events unfold in Iraq. The focus now needs to turn to the humanitarian requirements of the people of Iraq. We therefore urge the Security Council to do everything in its power to ensure that humanitarian aid is delivered quickly and effectively to those who so desperately need it. Our energies must be focused on alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people.

At this difficult and turbulent time our thoughts are with the coalition forces, and especially with the young men and women of the Marshall Islands who serve in the United States armed forces that are stationed in Iraq. We wish them all a safe and speedy return. Our thoughts and condolences are also with all of those who have lost loved ones in this conflict.

We hope and pray for a swift resolution of this conflict, and look forward to the establishment of a new and democratic Iraq free of weapons of mass destruction — free for its people to live in peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Uruguay, on whom I now call.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country's position with regard to its steadfast commitment to defending the international legal order, its attachment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its traditional adherence to settling disputes peacefully has already been clearly set forth in my statement during the Council's previous open debate, held prior to the beginning of military action. The purpose of my statement today is to associate ourselves with those countries that believe that the absolute priority issue now is to address the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people as fully and as promptly as possible.

Without prejudice to the political and legal debate surrounding the question of restoring international peace and security, we believe that, today more than ever, the Council should commit itself to promoting mechanisms that will ensure that the most pressing needs can be met, in particular in the areas of medicine and food. The Secretary-General should be given broad powers and sufficient discretion to restart the oil for food programme or to establish an alternative mechanism to ensure effective collective action in this regard.

In that connection, we should make full use of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system with technical experience and legal jurisdiction, in order to ensure the greatest efficiency, speed and coordination of efforts. The work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and of such organizations as the Red Cross and the Red Crescent are extremely important. We should therefore strengthen and fully support their efforts. The Government of Uruguay has already taken steps to act and has contacted the competent offices of the United Nations in order to obtain information regarding the most effective way our country can help provide for the basic needs of the Iraqi people.

Finally, allow me to say, in the strongest possible terms, that all the norms of international humanitarian law must be strictly observed.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): It is indeed most unfortunate and regrettable that war has broken out, but, as the Secretary-General said last week, it is time to confront the realities of the present. Regardless of the causes of this war, the undeniable reality is that hundreds of thousands of civilians are suffering as a result of it.

Our immediate attention must now be focused on alleviating the plight and suffering of these innocent civilians, particularly women and children. What we need at this crucial juncture is a coalition of the compassionate — a coalition of the giving — to mobilize and coordinate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq. It is incumbent on the United Nations, with the full support of the international community, to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq in a timely manner in order to protect the innocent, especially the most vulnerable groups, including women, children and the elderly, and to limit their exposure to and the impact of the devastating consequences of war. And we do hope that this war will end quickly so that the Iraqi people can rebuild their lives and dignity in an environment of enduring peace and freedom.

What is needed are rapid and well-coordinated efforts to ensure that humanitarian relief reaches the affected Iraqi population. Thailand commends the Secretary-General's initiatives to help plan and implement humanitarian assistance programmes for the Iraqi people, including adjustments to the oil for food programme. We are pleased that the Security Council is considering this important issue of humanitarian assistance in an active and urgent manner. We hope that these efforts will soon bear fruit so that humanitarian assistance will no longer be delayed. Thailand, on its part, stands ready to join this coalition for humanitarian assistance and will work with the United Nations and others to help alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and eventually to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Lithuania.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): Lithuania has associated itself with the statement that was made on behalf of the European Union yesterday.

Lithuania has always spoken out for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We regret the breakdown of the diplomatic efforts of the Security Council, yet we have also stood by the resolute opinion that no one shall be allowed to flout Security Council resolutions. Saddam Hussain's regime has been squandering the international community's patience for 12 years.

Our hope is that the conflict will end swiftly and that the loss of human life, suffering and destruction will be minimal. Our Parliament decided last Tuesday to offer medical and logistics personnel to the coalition forces. These specialists will also be essential in providing humanitarian relief to the Iraqi people.

Reconstructing and building a prosperous and peaceful Iraq will be a challenging task. The experience, capabilities and global reach of the United Nations in the coordination of assistance in post-conflict States can hardly be superseded. Lithuania is ready to contribute to a humanitarian settlement in the post-conflict period, closely coordinating its actions with the appropriate international institutions.

Once again, I reiterate that we associate ourselves with the European Union's position on this complex issue.

In times of grave crisis, it is vital for the international community to maintain unity and a sense of common objectives. We must profit from the vast United Nations potential. It is also important that the United States and Europe work hand in hand to secure the vital Euro-Atlantic link, seeking solutions to questions of strategic importance for all mankind.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Slovakia.

Ms. Novotná (Slovakia): My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on conducting the business of the Security Council with great skill and wisdom. The same compliments go to the German delegation, which presided over this body in the month of February.

We appreciate the decision of the Security Council to provide the floor to the wider United Nations membership to express their views in today's open debate. Slovakia has aligned itself with the statement of the Greek Presidency of the European Union. Nevertheless, we have asked for the floor to make a few additional comments in our national capacity on the issue of the utmost gravity before us: the situation in Iraq.

We deeply regret that diplomacy on Iraq has failed and that the Council was unable to bridge its divisions on such a crucial issue. We are convinced that, although the situation is serious, it is not permanent. Like others, Slovakia wished that political tools had made the difference and enabled us to avoid a crisis. We regret that the path of unity in the Security Council, which provided so well for the international community nearly five months ago, could not be followed.

At present, our foremost priority should dwell on dealing with the immediate humanitarian needs of the Iraqi population. My delegation is pleased to note that the parties involved have recognized the crucial role that the United Nations and its system should play in coping with the humanitarian situation in Iraq. Now is the moment for the Security Council to renew its unity and put aside the differences that have marked its consideration of the issue of disarmament.

The most urgent consideration should be given to the proposals made by the Secretary-General regarding necessary modifications to the oil for food programme in order to make the proceeds from Iraqi oil available for specific humanitarian purposes. This would be precisely in line with the principle that the natural resources of Iraq should be used strictly for the needs and benefits of the Iraqi people. We encourage the Security Council to swiftly proceed with negotiating and adopting a decision that would enable the Secretary-General to effectively manage the oil for food programme in order to satisfy the humanitarian situation that is rapidly evolving on the ground.

The people of Iraq are facing a difficult period today. They are confronted with the consequences of policies they have not had a real chance to influence. The Iraqi regime undoubtedly placed political objectives before humanitarian concerns. Slovakia believes that the people of Iraq deserve a better future than what they have experienced so far. Their interests will be best served by their being able to live in conditions of political and economic stability and peaceful and friendly relations with their neighbours in the region, while ensuring that the country's natural resources are truly used for their own benefit. Such a prospect would enjoy broad international support and respect. In this regard, we stress the utmost importance of the continued commitment of the international community to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Slovakia, for its part, is ready to contribute to solving the current crisis in Iraq and alleviating the plight of the people of the affected region. On the basis of a bilateral agreement concluded with the Kuwaiti Government, we dispatched to Kuwait a unit of experts highly skilled in the detection of and protection against biological and chemical agents, as well as other types of weapons of mass destruction. The unit has been given a clear mandate: to assist in humanitarian and rescue operations in cases when weapons of mass destruction are used or their use is suspected.

In conclusion, I would like to subscribe to the view that the United Nations must continue to play a central role during and after the current crisis. We commend the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to actively engage the relevant parts of the United Nations system in early humanitarian contingency planning.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of El Salvador.

Mr. Lagos Pizzati (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is regrettable that the intransigence of the Government of Iraq in complying with international obligations imposed on it by the Security Council since 1991, as a consequence of its own unlawful actions, which were an assault on the independence and territorial integrity of a Member State of our Organization, in flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, has led to the situation that we are now witnessing.

After 12 years, in the course of which the Iraqi regime defied and failed to comply with the binding decisions of the Security Council, the Council and the international community gave it one final opportunity to fully eliminate all its weapons of mass destruction, failing which it would face serious consequences. It is regrettable that even despite the intense international pressure brought to bear, the Government of Iraq did not demonstrate total, active and unconditional cooperation reflecting a real political will to comply with its obligations.

It is deplorable that the Government of Iraq did not heed or fully accept all the appeals of Member States to avoid armed conflict and the further suffering of its people. It is a position and conduct that make it directly responsible for the current situation in the country.

In light of the reality of war, my delegation can only hope that the conflict will end as soon as possible to avoid greater material destruction and, especially, the loss of human lives so that the United Nations and the international community can devote their resources and efforts to assisting reconstruction and rehabilitation in Iraq.

While it is regrettable that the Security Council has not maintained the consensus and unity that it

reached in adopting resolution 1441 (2002) on a question of general concern, the current international situation must serve as a basis for looking towards the future.

Historical experience has taught us that after profound crises and conflicts, societies re-emerge with creativity through new and better initiatives that benefit their peoples. One example of this is the origin and creation of the United Nations.

We concur with statements that the immediate challenge of the United Nations should be in the area of efforts for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq, through the adoption of a comprehensive programme of humanitarian assistance. In addition, Member States must take on the task, in a pragmatic way, of rebuilding and strengthening unity and trust in the United Nations system, especially the multilateral mechanism for collective security. The actions of the world Organization should not give rise to any doubt about its effectiveness, impartiality or legality, through a process of decision-making based on consensus and the shared interests of all Member States.

I wish to conclude by expressing the importance and urgency of continuing the oil for food programme, and I offer our support for the Secretary-General in the preparation of a programme responding to the needs of the Iraqi people.

I believe that it is appropriate to reaffirm here that the Government of El Salvador has, within its possibilities, offered to participate in a multilateral effort to assist in alleviating the humanitarian needs of Iraq in the post-war period.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The world currently finds itself in an extremely dangerous situation. Our Arab and Islamic region is faced with a war that has grave repercussions and negative consequences for the international system and international relations. War is proof of the failure of diplomacy and the failure of the United Nations and the Security Council, in particular, to undertake the tasks entrusted to them for the preservation of international peace and security. This war will foment hostility, hatred, violence and extremism. It will also lead to many disasters that the world would do well to avoid.

No sooner had it become apparent that war was on the horizon than the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia began efforts, individually or with our Arab and Muslim brothers and with the international community, to reach a peaceful settlement. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia became active on the Arab, Islamic and international levels. It proposed clear, logical and just ideas based on the absolute need for Iraq's full compliance with Security Council resolutions and its full cooperation with the inspectors and on the need to give diplomatic efforts a chance to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Regrettably, despite all the efforts to reach a peaceful and logical settlement of the Iraqi crisis, and despite international opposition to a destructive war, the sword has fallen. The two parties realized right from the earliest moments of the war that they would suffer great losses. War is a loss for both the victor and the vanquished. We now know all too well the horrendous scale of destruction in Iraq and the loss of life of thousands of innocent civilians. We know that lethal weapons do not distinguish between belligerents and non-belligerents. Nor do they avoid hurting children, women and the elderly. People with vision realize this tragic reality and understand the obvious need to favour wisdom and to study in depth the regional and international dimensions and repercussions of this crisis.

Reason dictates that military operations against Iraq be brought to a halt, that good offices and diplomatic efforts be resumed and that diplomatic work within the United Nations be resumed to solve the problem within a legitimate international context. Our work should be oriented towards preserving Iraq's national security and its civil institutions, which will break down under the pressure of war. We are all aware of the humanitarian and environmental devastation that this war will unleash against Iraq, not to mention the staggering political and economic costs.

In line with our firm, principled position, we categorically oppose the occupation of Iraq. We believe that the Iraqi people are capable of assuming responsibility for governing their country and do not need to be governed by foreign authorities. The sins of the Iraqi Government and its failure to comply fully with Security Council resolutions during the past 12 years should not be visited upon the fraternal Iraqi people, which has suffered excessively and for so long. The Iraqi people aspires to reaching a peaceful

solution, sparing Iraq and the world a war that no one really wants. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia insists on the unity, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, and demands an end to the war and the withdrawal of foreign forces outside Iraqi international borders.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, acting upon its responsibilities by contributing to humanitarian efforts and in keeping with the directives of its leaders, provided full-scale humanitarian assistance to more than 24,000 displaced persons, including camps, food and medical assistance. This is the first of many steps to take care of any urgent needs, to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of Iraqi citizens resulting from military operations. Centres have been established in the region of Ar ar on Iraq's international border. The Kingdom has already declared the region open for that purpose. We have also contacted international relief agencies, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross through the assistance of the Saudi Red Crescent Society to coordinate and deliver assistance to those in dire need after taking necessary legal measures through the United Nations.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that the Security Council is the party that should decide whether or not Iraq has any weapons of mass destruction. We must respect the principles of international law that have governed our world for more than half a century. These principles and international legitimacy protect the international community from any erosion of the bases of international relations.

The Middle East region cannot tolerate the repercussions of another destructive war. We need to put an end to the hotbeds of tension in the Middle East and work to make peace and security prevail. We must encourage cooperation, support development and enhance progress. Therefore, we demand that there be serious and effective action in the coming stage to reach an immediate and just solution to the Middle East problem and the occupied Arab territories on the basis of the Arab initiative anchored in the principle of land for peace, Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and the establishment of a Palestinian State alongside Israel, with East Jerusalem its capital.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Nakayama (Federated States of Micronesia): We have gathered here in the wake of the terrible events unfolding in Iraq. Only one week ago a war started that nobody wanted — neither the coalition fighting in Iraq nor the Iraqi people, nor certainly my own country. But the Iraqi regime missed the chance given by Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) and continued to ignore the will of the international community at the expense of its own people. We have joined the coalition, under the authority of a number of Security Council resolutions, most notably resolutions 678 (1990) and 1441 (2002), because it was the only way left to disarm the Iraqi regime and fully rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. Unhappy that it had to come to military action, we believe that the present course of action will result in a safer and better world for all humankind, especially for the people of the region itself.

We are greatly concerned with the humanitarian situation in Iraq, for which the Iraqi regime is fully responsible. It is imperative that supplies be able to enter in a safe manner and be distributed unimpeded. While supplies will be brought in initially by coalition forces, we hope that the various United Nations programmes will be able to resume their respective roles as soon as possible. Furthermore, the United Nations has to play a key role in rebuilding Iraq, not just from the current war but also from the suffering of the last 20-some years. We urge all Governments that can to contribute to this effort.

My Government is appalled by news of prisoners of war being mistreated, and it calls on the Iraqi regime to adhere to the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War and to honour all obligations therein, especially that of giving the International Committee of the Red Cross immediate and unconditional access and refraining from any inhumane or degrading treatment.

Addressing the situation in Iraq, my Government, in a recent declaration, stated:

> "The United Nations Organization must be and must remain the keystone of international cooperation as we proceed into the century of globalization. It would amount to a tragedy for

mankind if that Organization were to fail now to be worthy of the challenge so clearly before it."

Clearly, the Security Council must not fail to address the issue of rebuilding Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mrs. Mulamula (United Republic of Tanzania): We thank you for convening this important meeting, which is the first following the outbreak of war in Iraq. The general membership of the United Nations, through this meeting, will have the opportunity to communicate their views on this very critical issue involving international peace and security.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is deeply saddened by the decision taken by the United States and the coalition to resort to armed action in Iraq. With the declaration of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries adopted in February in Kuala Lumpur, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania had hoped that reason would prevail and time would be allowed to have the situation resolved in an amicable manner. Tanzania is therefore deeply troubled by the raging war and its inevitable consequences, not only in the region, but also throughout the world.

It is very ironic to note that the decision to disarm Iraq forcefully was taken while the international community, through this body, was in the midst of implementing resolution 1441 (2002). According to the periodic reports of the international inspectors presented in this forum, the work was progressing well and had started bearing positive results. Furthermore, at the time of the decision to embark on armed attack, there was no evidence found by the inspectors that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.

After observing the signs indicating that the United States and its coalition were slowly inching towards adopting unilateral measures, the international community expressed its concerns and called on the United States to change direction. I can cite here members of the African Union, the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States and many other countries, including some members of the European Union, who strongly expressed the view that the United Nations should be given more time to complete the task before any decision to use force against Iraq could be taken. The overwhelming view, it may be recalled, was that any decision to resort to the use of force should be taken by the United Nations, and this only after ensuring that all efforts towards a peaceful settlement had been exhausted and had failed. We are familiar with the fact that that course of action was rejected out of hand.

In that respect, the decision to resort to the use of force against Iraq is null and void, as it goes against United Nations Charter provisions that require the decision to use force against a country threatening international peace and security to be adopted by the Security Council. Article 39 of the Charter clearly states that only the Security Council can determine the existence of a breach of peace or of an act of aggression, and only the Security Council can recommend, or decide on, what measures are to be taken.

The decision to go to war without the authority of the Council not only weakens the United Nations — the only institution serving all countries all over the world — but also has the potential to endanger international peace and security. One cannot predict with any certainty what will happen to the very volatile region of the Middle East. The question of Palestine has long required urgent action, but none has been forthcoming. Every day, more deaths fill the media screens. How many more must die before the Security Council decides to act? Tanzania hopes and expects that all countries will continue to respect and honour the procedures that have been laid down for the taking and implementing of decisions of high import through the United Nations.

The United Nations was established out of the need to save future generations from the scourge of war, which had brought immense misery to mankind and whose effects are still felt to this day, over 50 years later. Tanzania does not believe that that mission has changed. Hence, besides infringing the provisions of international law, the war will definitely lead to the loss of many innocent lives in Iraq. The economy of Iraq and those of many other countries, particularly poor and developing ones, will be adversely affected by the consequences of war. In addition, the war will further exacerbate the political and social problems currently facing the world — particularly that of international terrorism, which we all are working hard to combat.

In conclusion, Tanzania urges the Security Council to see to it that everything that can be done is done, as soon as possible, immediately to bring the war to an end and to address the ever-deteriorating humanitarian situation in Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council is meeting today to discuss the destructive war that is being waged against Iraq and its repercussions, including, naturally, the tremendous humanitarian suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people. We hope that the Security Council will be able to put an end to what it taking place and that it will shoulder its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations.

It is an established fact that this war is being waged outside the context of the United Nations and without any authorization by the Council. It is also a fact that the majority of the members of the Security Council, not to mention the majority of the Members of the United Nations, were against this war and had called for time to be given to the inspections regime to fulfil its mandate under resolution 1441 (2002). Furthermore, this war will have far-reaching and profound repercussions for the Middle East region and for the system of international relations, including on the United Nations itself.

The international community must therefore give in-depth consideration to the issue, so that we can promptly arrive at a solution that will mitigate such destructive tendencies. The Palestinian people — given the long suffering that they have experienced under occupation and aggression — cannot but oppose the use of force in settling international disputes.

Our people stand side by side with our other Arab brethren, and we stand, therefore, in full solidarity with the Iraqi people, who are suffering as a result of the military operations being carried out by forces led by the United States. Our people are becoming increasingly angry and frustrated and feel hostility between themselves and those whom they deem responsible for whatever is currently happening, in addition to what has happened throughout the years.

We support the resolutions adopted by the summits of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab Summit, as well as the decision of the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States. We call for an immediate cessation of the military operations against Iraq, and we call for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraqi land.

We stress the importance of Iraqi unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We condemn any attempt to erode Iraq independence. We must fully respect the Geneva conventions, not only those relative to the protection of prisoners of war but also those relative to the protection of civilians. We welcome the renewed interest in and importance attached by some to those conventions, and we call for their full respect at all times, in compliance with the legal commitments undertaken by the High Contracting Parties.

Change, even for the better, cannot come from outside, nor can it be imposed on peoples, particularly through the use of military force. Nor can political systems be imposed from outside. This was one of the basic principles of the international system until now. Therefore we cannot but express our concern over what is described as the conceptual basis of what is happening, and not only at the developments on the ground.

We in Palestine are concerned over what is happening, because there is a real fear that Mr. Sharon and his Government — one of the primary beneficiaries of the war — will escalate their bloody military campaign against our people and take additional illegitimate measures on the ground.

We call on the Security Council to remain attentive to the situation in the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, in the coming weeks. Nothing angers Arab and Palestinian citizens more than the double standards we have come to experience, or sometimes the absence of any criteria when the situation has to do with us Arabs and Palestinians, and therefore there is a need to put an end to that. We have good reason not to believe that this will happen, and hope that we are wrong.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Given the current military conflict in Iraq, it is the chief concern of the Costa Rican Government to plead for respect for human rights, above and beyond

any other consideration. We wish to speak out for children, fathers and mothers, older persons, the displaced and the wounded — that is to say, the real victims of war, whatever their allegiance. Costa Rica calls on the warring parties to respect Iraq's territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence, in conformity with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Moreover, at the end of the armed conflict, the parties maintaining troops on Iraqi territory must continue to comply with their obligations, in conformity with international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. For that reason, Costa Rica urges that the civilian population's security and inalienable human rights — particularly their right to life and personal integrity — be guaranteed. We demand that all warring parties comply scrupulously with their obligations under international humanitarian law, particularly their obligations arising out of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977.

Likewise, my delegation demands full respect for international humanitarian law and international refugee law, with a view to providing the broadest possible protection for all refugees, internally displaced persons and other victims of the hostilities. We appeal to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to devote immediate attention to the situation of such persons. The fundamental rights of prisoners of war, irregular combatants and all other detained persons must be fully respected, in conformity with the norms of international law governing armed conflict.

In my country, we are convinced that legitimate, lasting and sustainable peace in Iraq can be built only through multilateral action within the framework of the United Nations. For that reason, we consider it essential to establish a temporary administrative structure in Iraq at the end of the armed conflict, under United Nations monitoring and administration, with a view to ensuring a climate of stability and to creating the conditions necessary for lasting peace and respect for human rights.

Throughout the rebuilding phase, we must bear in mind that Iraq must comply fully with all its disarmament obligations, must be free of weapons of mass destruction and must not become a refuge for international terrorist organizations. In that context, we regard the role of the United Nations as essential in the definition, elaboration and implementation of the principal objectives of Iraq's reconstruction. Moreover, with a view to providing humanitarian relief to the most vulnerable populations and to financing reconstruction, the Organization must administer Iraq's natural resources — particularly oil — in conformity with the relevant Security Council resolutions and bearing in mind, above all, the Iraqi people's best interests.

My delegation invites the Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Programme to take a detailed inventory of the war's economic effects and to assess needs for international cooperation for reconstruction. In parallel, we call on the international community — in particular the warring States — to cooperate with Iraq in repairing the pernicious environmental effects of the conflict.

Finally, Costa Rica reaffirms its full support for United Nations specialized agencies charged with monitoring respect for and implementation of humanitarian law and human rights in situations of armed conflict and after conflicts. We express our firm resolve to contribute to the extent of our ability — together with international humanitarian assistance bodies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations specialized agencies — to programmes aimed at the rebuilding of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Security Council for this opportunity to address an issue of major concern to the international community.

The issue before us has been discussed here for many years, beginning with Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, a small neighbouring country. The Government of Iraq's record with regard to the use of chemical weapons against its Kurdish population and during aggression against Iran is a matter of the most serious concern to all of us. The Government of Iraq's lack of serious commitment thus far to fully complying with Security Council resolutions has contributed to the grave situation we are facing today.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, we share the views expressed in the final documents of the Kuala Lumpur Summit, in particular regarding the need for the Iraqi Government to fully comply with Security Council resolution 1441 (2002).

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste issued a statement on 19 March that expressed, inter alia, its consternation at the Security Council's inability to reach a consensus on the implementation and enforcement of its resolutions concerning Iraq. As a small, peace-loving country, we stand for a multilateral approach in the search for solutions to the problems affecting the world.

It is our hope that, in the current military intervention, all sides will respect international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I, concerning the treatment of civilians and prisoners of war. We appeal to the Secretary-General and to the members of the Security Council to continue to focus their attention on this grave situation and to build a consensus, not only to provide adequate and urgent humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people, but also to bring about lasting peace with respect for territorial integrity and to work on scenarios for the post-conflict situation.

Timor-Leste knows from its own experience that when the United Nations system — in particular the Security Council — is willing to act, it has proved to be very effective in restoring peace and international legality, in maintaining stability and in creating sound foundations for democratic countries in which human rights and freedom will flourish. At this difficult moment, we should like to express our solidarity with the people of Iraq in their struggle for lasting peace, freedom, democracy, human rights and national reconciliation.

We share the conviction — expressed here by many countries — that we must also address the demands for freedom and independence on the part of the people of Palestine in order to achieve lasting peace, justice and stability in the region. Therefore, we welcome the renewed commitment of the United States of America and the European Union in that regard.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, made an urgent appeal for unity and common purpose in the Security Council. In echoing his appeal, we urge the Council to continue to search for solutions to these and other conflicts with determination and unity, fulfilling their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Honduras.

Mr. Acosta Bonilla (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council has all the world's citizens in suspense. Its wisdom and its ability to act will largely determine its future, which is seriously threatened by war, by economic crisis and, in wide areas, by hunger. Another factor is the uncertainty of humanity's future. The relative tranquillity of the post-war and post-cold-war periods is now being lost, as events have called into question the institution created specifically to ensure global peace and harmony.

During the past half-century that we have experienced, the main role has been played by the United Nations, which, despite its limitations and weaknesses, has finally been able to tackle the long list of conflicts of conflicts and crises that mankind has faced over the past 50 years. What concerns everyone now is that the United Nations is paralysed and that this uncontrolled situation may cause its ultimate destruction. The hope for a democratic world that respects human rights seems to be dissipating in an atmosphere charged with destructive and violent forces.

Hondurans want to enjoy universal peace and a world governed by law and providing opportunities for advancement to all the men and women on the earth, so they may enjoy civilized life and prosperity. In order to make this a reality, it is absolutely necessary for the United Nations to continue to operate with legal force and efficiency in order to resolve problems of any kind that may injure humankind.

Hondurans have hope the Security Council will bring to bear its authority to ensure that current differences are promptly overcome and that confidence in the Council's unity remains, so that it may correctly address the world affairs on its agenda. What is in jeopardy is infinitely more valuable — morally, culturally and economically — than the matters that have led to division which should be overcome promptly and properly.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in his heroic struggles at the beginning of this current tragedy correctly stated that it is an urgent necessity to ensure that humanitarian assistance is not interrupted for those

in need, and that, above and beyond any other consideration, the institution's procedures must be reorganized so as to continue the delivery of medicines, foodstuffs and shelter to the children, women and elderly who require them. We cannot allow the tragedy to take on inhuman dimensions in the twenty-first century. The Security Council must immediately support the Secretary-General and establish the necessary provisions to meet the needs of the millions in need.

The Security Council must, together, or each member individually, make the maximum effort to ensure a promising and satisfactory future for the millions of human beings who aspire to such a future. It also has the unavoidable obligation to salvage the institution of the United Nations, which is the safeguard ensuring that individuals and States, large and small, can continue to live harmoniously and in peace. May there be peace for the benefit of all peoples.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Padilla Tonos (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the present circumstances, the Dominican Republic is committed to participate in all efforts of the United Nations and the international community to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. It supports the idea that the Security Council give the Secretary-General the requisite authority and means to carry out that urgent task.

The Dominican Republic also hopes that the military action under way in Iraq will be of short duration, that loss of human life and material damage on all sides will be kept to a minimum, that the Geneva Conventions will be respected in accordance with international humanitarian law, that the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Iraq will be preserved, that as early as possible conditions will be created to allow the Iraqi people to live in a freedom and democracy, and that Iraq will be able, as soon as possible, to be fully reintegrated into the international community within the legal and political order which is perfectly articulated in the United Nations Charter. This is the Charter of an Organization that today must be preserved more than ever, under all circumstances, while within this Organization we must strengthen the unity of the Security Council as the primary organ responsible for international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Beyendeza (Uganda): In the last few months, Uganda and other members of the African Union, and the Non-Aligned Movement sought to achieve a peaceful disarmament and resolution of the crisis in Iraq in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1441 (2002). It is unfortunate that diplomacy failed, as the United Nations Security Council was unable to reach a consensus on implementation of resolution 1441 (2002) to eliminate the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. As a result, war broke out on 20 March 2003.

The Ugandan Government decided on 21 March 2003 to support the United States-led coalition to disarm Iraq by force. The reasons for this decision have already been forwarded to the Security Council with a request to circulate them to all members. Uganda wishes also to reaffirm its strong support for the people of Palestine to have a State of their own side by side with Israel.

Uganda's main concerns are terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Uganda has been a victim of State-sponsored terrorism of the worst type and the Government of Saddam Hussain has provided active support to some of the terrorist groups that have operated against Uganda. Since 1986, such terrorist groups, including the Holy Spirit Movement, the Uganda People's Army, the Lord's Resistance Army, the Allied Democratic Forces and the West Nile Bank Front, have killed and inflicted untold misery on the population of Uganda, including burning to death students at Kichwamba Technical School. You have also heard of the deaths inflicted in the impenetrable forests of Bwindi in western Uganda and of human beings cooked in pots as was the case in Adilang in northern Uganda.

In Kampala alone, there have been over 48 bomb blasts resulting in 86 deaths and 286 severe injuries. The list goes on.

The link between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction is a threat to international peace and security that has been recognized by the Security Council. Considering the fact that Saddam Hussain has previously used these weapons of mass destruction on

his own people. Uganda believes that the danger of these weapons falling into the hands of terrorist groups is real.

We hope that the war will be short and civilian casualties will be minimized. Uganda would like to emphasize the need to ensure that the unity and independence of Iraq, including its sovereignty and territorial integrity, is maintained.

In addition, the international community may wish to focus on the immediate post-conflict mechanism after lifting the trade sanctions against Iraq to facilitate control by the Iraqi people of their own resources at the expiration of the oil for food programme.

Uganda welcomes and supports the Secretary-General's statements to the Council on 19 and 26 March 2003 on the continued United Nations role to avert the plight of war on the Iraqi people by effectively extending humanitarian assistance, including rebuilding basic infrastructure. The international community should support the Secretary-General's efforts to mobilize the necessary resources, including revenue currently under the oil for food programme, to reverse the humanitarian crisis that the Iraqi people are faced with.

Uganda feels that energies of the international community should now be concentrated on the post-war period. Given the divisive run-up to the current war in Iraq, there is need to restore the central role that United Nations should continue to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is also important that the attention of the international community not be distracted from the various key areas that are critical in building a safer world in the twenty-first century.

In our view, these include the following areas: The first is the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict in the Middle East to ensure that both Israeli and Palestinian States exist side by side in secure and internationally recognized borders. Secondly, we need to build a global, multilateral and sustained campaign against terrorism. We must recognize the potential danger from the link between terrorists and weapons of mass destruction. The use of indiscriminate violence in pursuit of political or any other goals should be outlawed. Thirdly, we need to reverse the marginalization of Africa and other developing countries, ensuring equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization.

Finally, Uganda calls upon the international community to urgently agree on measures to mitigate the negative impact of the conflict in the Gulf region, especially on the fragile economies in Africa and developing countries.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Mahendran (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka has consistently urged Iraq to comply fully with the United Nations Security Council resolutions obliging it to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Until now, the lack of full compliance has led to the present situation. Therefore, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq has not been completed through peaceful means. Unfortunately, the lack of concurrence in the Security Council on how to proceed with its own resolution 1441 (2002), adopted unanimously, has led to the collapse of the United Nations process.

Sri Lanka is committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. We are greatly disturbed by the outbreak of this conflict in the Middle East. Sri Lanka is gravely concerned about the massive political, economic, social and, above all, humanitarian consequences that would ensue in the military conflict, affecting Iraq, the Middle East region and indeed international peace and security.

We express our confidence in the coalition partners to move early to minimize the adverse consequences on the civilian population in Iraq and, in association with other members of the international community, to coordinate rehabilitation efforts in the country.

The United Nations must play an active role during and after the crisis situation. In this context, there is an urgent need to address the major humanitarian requirements of the Iraqi people and to ensure the safety of the civilian people.

Beyond the current issue, the United Nations must continue to play an undiminished role in other situations of tension such as, in particular, the question of Palestine. There should be substantial progress towards an enduring and just peace, in which the State of Israel and Palestine can live in freedom and mutual trust within secure boundaries in accordance with

Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

The all-pervasive evil of terrorism must not at this stage be permitted to exploit and thrive on the global uncertainty and tension, which have now been heightened. The international consensus and collective will to eradicate all forms and manifestations of terrorism, wherever and in whatever circumstances it occurs, must not be deflected or blunted. Terrorism should not be identified and stereotyped with any particular religion, nationality or civilization.

It is tragic in the current dangerous situation that the United Nations system, in particular the Security Council, has been rendered ineffective, and apparently even abandoned, due to disagreement among its members. Sri Lanka nevertheless continues to firmly believe that issues affecting international peace and security should be as far as possible identified, considered and resolved through the United Nations, the primary global institution through which the will of the international community can be legitimately expressed.

Therefore, it is essential that the role of the United Nations and its credibility and authority be restored and respected. The Government will continue to monitor closely the complex implications of the situation in Iraq. Sri Lanka will also seek to work closely with like-minded countries in the national and collective imperative to keep United Nations alive.

Sri Lanka urges a quick end to this crisis based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and the safety, security and welfare of its people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Kenya and Slovenia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objections, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jalang'o (Kenya) and Mr. Kirn (Slovenia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Zenna (Ethiopia): At the outset, let me commend you, Mr. President, for arranging this meeting. Ethiopia, as a country that co-sponsored the first resolution as a member of the Security Council, deeply regrets that 12 years had to pass without compliance, and the Government of Iraq still chose not to take the final opportunity afforded to it by resolution 1441 (2002). The onus to avoid war has always been on the Iraqi regime. And the regime failed to avert war.

Ethiopia firmly believes in the collective security envisaged by the Charter. As stated by the Secretary-General before this Council yesterday, "The Council, which have now had Iraq on its agenda for 12 long years, must rediscover its unity of purpose". The Council's unity of purpose needs to be restored and further strengthened.

Now is the time to look forward, not backwards. There is a big humanitarian challenge ahead of us. Now is the time for the Council to look into the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people, during and after the current crisis.

We believe the Council should continue to play a central role in that regard. As such, it is imperative for the Council to draw up a mechanism that will allow for the provision of immediate humanitarian assistance to the needy. It should also consider long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. As already requested, the Council should act with urgency to resume the oil for food programme by giving the required legislative mandate to the Secretary-General and by adopting the draft humanitarian resolution before it.

We also support the call of the Secretary-General for both sides to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian laws governing the conduct of war, including the treatment of prisoners of war.

In conclusion, Ethiopia appeals to the members of the Security Council, particularly to the five permanent members, to demonstrate leadership in carrying out the solemn duty entrusted to them by the United Nations Charter.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kyrgyzstan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Baialinov (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to read out the text of the statement issued by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan with regard to the item on today's agenda:

> "Due to the initiation of hostilities in Iraq, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic would like to express its extreme concern and regret over the fact that the Iraqi problem has begun to be dealt with by the use of force, bypassing decisions of the Security Council of the United Nations, the primary international body for collective security.
>
> "I would like to point out that Kyrgyzstan has always called for a political settlement of the Iraqi problem, on the basis of the existing relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In the current circumstances, Kyrgyzstan deeply regrets that the opportunity for a political settlement has been missed. We nevertheless hope that it will be possible to avoid civilian casualties and the use of weapons of mass destruction.
>
> "We would like to express the hope that the consolidated efforts of the entire international community will help avert a humanitarian crisis in the area. We also hope that peace and stability on Iraqi soil will soon be achieved, and that the post-conflict reconstruction of Iraq will begin as soon as possible.
>
> "With regard to questions stemming from the international anti-terrorism coalition's use of the Ganci air base at Manas airport in connection with hostilities in Iraq, we would again like to point out that, while being fully aware of our responsibilities, under agreements signed by Kyrgyzstan with countries comprising that coalition, the air base may be used only for the purpose of ensuring the successful conduct of the anti-terrorism operation in Afghanistan."

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jordan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States recently held a meeting to consider the very dangerous situation in Iraq. That meeting adopted a decision reflecting the feelings of the Arab people. In that regard, Jordan affirmed, as part of international efforts, the need to find a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis in order to avoid war and its negative and devastating effects, both in Iraq and in the region. However, most regrettably, it was not possible to find such a solution.

Jordan is continuing to expand its contacts with fraternal Arab countries and members of the international community in order to end hostilities as soon as possible and to avert more physical and human casualties. We also seek to avoid violation of Iraq's territorial integrity, natural resources and national unity.

Jordan is saddened and regrets the humanitarian situation in Iraq, and would like to express our deep concern with regard to this subject. We reaffirm our commitment to provide whatever assistance and humanitarian aid may be necessary — in particular as concerns Iraqi refugees.

His Majesty the King of Jordan has made the following statement to the people of Jordan:

> "We are deeply committed to meeting our humanitarian and fraternal responsibilities vis-à-vis the Iraqi people to the extent of our capabilities. We will therefore do our utmost to end this war as soon as possible and to alleviate the suffering of our brothers and help them cope with the effects of the war."

Jordan would like to reiterate its appeal to the international community and the parties concerned to live up to their international responsibilities to ease the plight of the Iraqi people so that they may overcome their current situation. We call for an end to the war and for the provision and delivery of the necessary humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people. We also call upon the Security Council to live up to its responsibilities, including by adopting a new resolution on the oil for food programme as soon as possible.

The dangerous crises in the Middle East also make it essential that we succeed in our efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kenya, on whom I now call.

Mr. Jalang'o (Kenya): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for facilitating this debate so that the general membership of the United Nations can express its views on the extremely important and serious situation in Iraq.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to fully associate itself with the statement made yesterday by Ambassador Rastam Mohd Isa of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Secondly, my delegation wishes to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his very important statement during this debate and for the way he has continued to handle this crisis. At a time when the situation is escalating to engulf the well-being, welfare and lives of non-combatants — especially women and children — it is important that the Secretary-General's voice of reason continues to be a beacon of hope.

My delegation has always been convinced that the provisions of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) were adequate to resolve the issue of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction through peaceful means. Indeed, the arms inspectors reinforced that conviction in all their reports. However, we are now faced with a situation in which the role of the Untied Nations has been rendered less effective. It is a situation in which the roles of the arms inspectors and the humanitarian workers have been suspended due to the dangers posed by the ongoing war. Daily, we are witnessing an ever-rising number of civilian casualties, some far removed from the actual theatre of war. We also have a large number of people without drinking water and food. It is a situation that invites epidemics of catastrophic proportions, bearing in mind that, even before the outbreak of war, children were still dying of curable diseases, hunger and malnutrition.

My delegation strongly urges that the humanitarian situation in Iraq be addressed with the urgency it deserves, as has been underlined in the statements of the Secretary-General and of all other speakers. My delegation also calls for respect for the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq. It is our sincere belief that the people of Iraq should have the freedom to enjoy the abundance of their natural resources under the guidance of the Government of their choice.

Finally, my delegation strongly urges the United Nations to remain focused on the current situation in Iraq, which is a threat to international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): In addition to associating ourselves with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Greece on behalf of the European Union member and acceding countries, we wish, in our national capacity, to add a few points.

We welcome the opportunity of having an open debate of the Security Council on such an important issue. In so doing, we remain committed to the relevant conclusions of the European Council, including those of 17 February and of 20 March 2003.

Slovenia has continuously held the view that the Security Council is the body holding primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is urgent to reaffirm and restore the Council's credibility and authority as the body addressing and resolving crises threatening international peace and stability.

Slovenia continues to support all efforts of the international community to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It has been and continues to be our position that Iraq was obliged to fully and unconditionally comply with international norms, and specifically with the requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1441 (2002). We would have strongly preferred that the disarmament of Iraq and its verification had been achieved without resorting to use of force. We regret that unanimity could not be reached within the Council on ways to resolve the Iraqi crisis by ensuring compliance with its previous resolutions in accordance with the United Nations Charter, other norms of international law and the relevant Council resolutions.

We wish to use this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work of the inspections process, and specifically to both chief inspectors Dr. Blix and Dr. ElBaradei and their teams for their work and reports submitted to the Council.

At the current time, it is vital to ensure full respect for the norms of international humanitarian law and universal human rights. We salute the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for its courageous work. During this time of war, ICRC's unimpeded access in crisis areas is of vital importance. As a

concrete gesture in support of its work, Slovenia will provide a donation to ICRC's activities in Iraq.

Every effort must be engaged to minimize the effect of the war on Iraqi civilians. Our combined special attention should be particularly addressed to the vulnerable population, and especially to the Iraqi children. Slovenia, as a member of the Human Security Network, is deliberating a possible contribution to that effect.

Slovenia hopes that the oil for food programme can be resumed as soon as possible. We support the Secretary-General's proposals in this respect. In current deliberations over the extension of the programme, we should always bear in mind that the majority of the Iraqi population is critically dependent upon the programme.

The resolution of the Iraqi crisis and dealing with its consequences should be restored to the United Nations framework. We further hope that political and security conditions can be created for the return of United Nations personnel to affected areas to provide urgent humanitarian assistance.

Slovenia is willing to contribute its share in addressing the major humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people and affected neighbouring States arising from the conflict, and will respond favourably to the appeal to be issued by the United Nations to meet humanitarian needs in and around Iraq. Slovenia will also try to contribute to the best of its abilities to the post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraqi society.

In conclusion, Slovenia appeals for the restoration of the unity of the international community as soon as possible in resolving the Iraqi crisis in the framework of the United Nations and the Security Council. We join in the call of the Secretary-General to the Security Council to reunite around a new resolve to uphold the principles of the Charter.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico commends you, Sir, on your decision to respond immediately to the request submitted by a large number of States Members of the United Nations to convene today's debate. Bearing in mind this Council's commitment to transparency, we have heard more than one third of States Members averring their positions in this Chamber on the war in Iraq, its immediate effects and its probable consequences; on the humanitarian needs of the affected populations; on the responsibilities and duties which international humanitarian law imposes on the parties; and on the reconstruction of Iraq.

Two common concerns have been expressed in all the positions stated in this debate. The first bears on the circumstances in which this war will come to an end and on what we can do to halt it. The second bears on the question of the future of our Organization, the United Nations.

In the eyes of the world, this Council is fractured. Indeed, the formula for achieving the disarmament of Iraq divided us. The differences that emerged here have led to an intensive debate about the authority of the Security Council, the validity of multilateralism, the United Nations capacity to enforce its resolutions and, in general, the effectiveness of the collective security mechanisms established in the United Nations Charter.

In these circumstances and at this time of reflection, Mexico reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations and its conviction that it is only within the framework of the San Francisco Charter and by means of multilateral decision-making mechanisms that humankind will be able to find genuine and effective formulas of collective security that will truly prevent conflict, proscribe the use of force in international relations, induce parties to choose peaceful means of resolving their disputes, stop war once it has begun, restore peace in fair conditions, and promote full and complete disarmament and the eradication of weapons of mass destruction.

The Security Council was established with the central mandate of ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security. Nothing today has changed that. In carrying out that mandate, we in the Security Council must strive through diplomatic actions to secure an end to this conflict. The disagreements that prevented the Council from continuing inspections and the peaceful disarmament of Iraq do not nullify the aspirations of the United Nations or invalidate multilateralism. They do not divert us from the values that gave life to the Organization. What is happening in Iraq should be a sign that the world cannot dispense with the United Nations.

Mexico regrets the war and deplores the suffering of the Iraqi people. Destruction and the loss of human life must be avoided. Together with other members of the Council, my country sought formulas of

understanding that would have enabled the Council to maintain by collective agreement the inspections regime and political and diplomatic pressure, by means of which we believed we could achieve the peaceful disarmament of Iraq.

Faced with the impossibility of reaching such an agreement, Mexico maintains its conviction that this war should not have broken out. We uphold our commitment to continue working within the Security Council to find positions and actions that enable us to restore peace in Iraq.

In that regard, the immediate challenge to the Council is not to fall into paralysis or irrelevance. We must overcome our differences and promptly reach a consensus that will enable us, first and foremost, to meet without delay the humanitarian responsibilities already assumed by the Council, on which depend the welfare and, today, the survival of a large part of the Iraqi population.

That is the task and mandate of the oil for food programme established pursuant to resolution 986 (1995): to use resources from the sale of the petroleum of that country to alleviate the consequences of the sanctions imposed on Iraq. The resources of that programme belong to the Iraqis. Nothing could justify a failure by the Security Council today to take the decisions necessary to enable the people of Iraq to benefit immediately from those resources. To the extent that the Council is able to reactivate that programme and to respond to this grave humanitarian emergency by granting the Secretary-General the powers necessary for its functioning, we will be able in the near future to influence the establishment of conditions that put an end to the armed conflict.

In that regard, Mexico welcomes the presentation of the humanitarian "flash appeal", as the Secretary-General has called it, which was developed by the Secretary-General and which appeals to all Member States to contribute generously to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. Mexico will make its contribution to that effort.

The United Nations must now also strive to ensure that all the parties involved in this conflict respect international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, in which are enshrined the responsibilities and obligations of the belligerent parties and the fundamental rights of the civilian population, regardless of the cause of or grounds for war. It is in our hands to ensure that the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations devoted to humanitarian relief can fulfil their mission and act with the necessary safeguards in any location where direct or indirect victims of this war are found.

It is also incumbent upon the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole to do their utmost to ensure that all States respect the territorial integrity of Iraq, as well as the fundamental and inalienable rights of the Iraqi people over their resources, in particular their oil. Whatever dimensions the armed conflict assumes, here in the United Nations we must make a great effort to ensure that peace in Iraq is not re-established at the expense of the country's territorial integrity. If this conflict is taking place because of decisions taken outside the Security Council, the Council is nonetheless the only body with the legitimacy, authority and powers necessary for undertaking a peace process.

This conflict has made evident the need to reflect and to define the actions to take in three principle areas: first, strengthening multilateralism, in particular the role of the United Nations and the Security Council; second, the search for consensus on the means for effectively achieving the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction; and third, updating the norms of international law relating to armed conflict. All Member States should participate in this process of reflection, contributing ideas and proposals for the reinvigoration and transformation of the United Nations.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): First, let me assure you, Mr. President, that I will be brief, in compliance with your reiterated request. Let me stress the very valuable contributions of a good number of speakers before me, which greatly enriched our debate on this very important issue.

Secondly, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling this meeting at the request of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab States. Your decision gives the whole membership of the United Nations the opportunity to express its views and to present proposals that might contribute to resolving the grave situation that the world is facing due to large-scale hostilities whose consequences will surely be far-reaching for the peoples of Iraq, the

Middle East region and the international community in its entirety.

The current situation in Iraq, which affects the entire Middle East, is a source of great concern to us all, since this is a vital region of the world where in the last 100 years very high strategic stakes have been played with far-reaching impact. The region's immense wealth has in large measure shaped the model of development that the world has today. Thus, it is understandable that the entire world community represented here at the United Nations feels deeply concerned about what is happening in that vital region. The contributions that we have been witnessing in this debate by all countries — big and small — are testimony of the seriousness of the current situation and of the concern about the real danger of the disruption of the present world order.

The fact that we in Angola have lived through many years of war has been a source of inspiration to us to genuinely join efforts in the Security Council to strive for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Iraq. Thus, we deplore that the efforts and the good will of so many countries were uprooted by war, which puts us all in the situation of trying to control the damage inflicted on the Iraqi people and on international relations. In that context, we urge the parties to the conflict to strictly abide by international humanitarian law and avoid, by all means, afflicting further suffering on the civilian population.

Under the present circumstances, it is our duty to do everything in our power to reduce the heavy plight being endured by the Iraqi people and to deploy all efforts to face the humanitarian situation in Iraq. The Secretary-General presented to us a set of proposals that we have all approved, and we should, therefore, quickly move forward in order to make them operational, assisting the Iraqi people in this very difficult hour.

Besides assisting the Iraqi people in the humanitarian field, it is our view that the international community, and Arab countries in particular that share with Iraq a common cultural, geographic and political heritage, should assist the country in recuperating from the wounds of war and help Iraq, with the advent of peace, to occupy the place that it rightfully deserves in the community of free nations.

In our view, we should avoid mutual recriminations and avoid putting in doubt the effectiveness and the role of the Security Council. To the contrary, we believe that we will make a great contribution to world peace and security if we deploy collective efforts to enable the Security Council to continue to play its role, however imperfect — as all human beings are — as the international community's guarantor of international peace and security, and, as the hope of people, nations and institutions at times of crises and disbelief.

It is possible to overcome critical times, and times of crisis are particularly favourable for reflection and assessment. We believe that events in Iraq and the aftermath of the Security Council's failure to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis might constitute a very favourable moment to engage in a great debate on the future of the world and on the role of the United Nations and the Security Council in shaping a world that is more peaceful, just, equitable and secure.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): War has come again to the Gulf. War is not only the last option. It is also an ugly option. Pakistan deplores the resort to the use of force. This was a war that Pakistan tried strenuously and sincerely to prevent. This is a war that was 12 years in the making. It could have been prevented if the increasingly robust United Nations inspections regime, installed after the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), had been allowed more time to secure the effective and verified elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

A large segment of the United Nations membership has participated in this debate initiated at the request of the League of Arab States and the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries. We hope that the concerns voiced here and the positions articulated will help the Council find a united way forward in dealing with the challenges we confront. We thank the Secretary-General for his very thoughtful statement yesterday. His eloquent call for urgent humanitarian relief for the Iraqi people and for unity within the Council deserves our utmost attention.

The outbreak of this war was not due to the failure of the Security Council. The Council did not endorse the war. The Security Council remains relevant to restoring peace, containing the conflict, providing relief and restoring stability and the rule of law.

As Pakistan has said, the time and space for diplomacy never ends. The mandate of this Council is not only to maintain, but also to restore, international

peace and security. In this situation, the Security Council cannot give up efforts to secure a cessation of hostilities. Even in the midst of conflict, we must continue our collective efforts to search for ways and means by which peace can be restored. Obviously, we will not be able to achieve this through condemnation or recrimination, however deplorable the use of force. We could do so through exploration of the possibilities for peace between the warring parties. Surely no one wishes to witness the needless loss of life of their sons and daughters, and especially not innocent civilians. Therefore, the search for the magic ring must not be given up.

In this war, people must come first. To contain the human consequences of the conflict is our most urgent task. Pakistan was the first to call on the Council to address the welfare of the Iraqi people. This is a task that we can fulfil. We join in mourning for those, especially the innocent men, women and children, who have lost their lives in these early days of the conflict. The Council must ask for strict respect for international humanitarian law by the parties to the conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has warned that humanitarian law prohibits direct attacks against civilians and requires that belligerents must take every precaution in military operations to spare the civilian population. Humanitarian law also states that "the right to choose weapons of warfare is not unlimited. Weapons having indiscriminate effect and/or causing unnecessary suffering are forbidden".

Besides protecting civilians, sparing infrastructure and preserving the sanctity of the holy places, the parties to the conflict must treat detainees humanely and provide maximum protection and assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons.

As stipulated by the Fourth Geneva Convention, those in effective control or occupation of any territory are responsible for meeting the humanitarian needs of the population and are required to maintain dialogue and cooperation with international organizations engaged in humanitarian relief.

Due to the application of sanctions for a dozen years, the Iraqi people are unfortunately dependent, in order to meet their essential needs, on the United Nations-operated oil for food programme. This relationship has now been disrupted. Warned of the impending war, the Secretary-General had no choice but to withdraw United Nations personnel. However, now, once the parameters of the conflict become clearer, the United Nations could begin to resume its role and responsibilities for humanitarian and food assistance to the Iraqi people. Fortunately, the United Nations has the machinery to discharge these responsibilities.

Pakistan agrees that appropriate adjustments need to be made to the oil for food programme to enable the Secretary-General to ensure that the shipments of the most urgently required items that have already been contracted for are the first to be delivered at places where they can be received and distributed.

We believe that, for the provision of emergency relief, the first consideration should be humanity rather than legality. The United Nations must deal with whoever is in effective control in the areas where aid is to be distributed. It must use all the existing Iraqi distribution networks for that purpose.

In this context, arrangements should be put in place to enable all humanitarian agencies and organizations which are prepared to assist, including humanitarian organizations in several Islamic countries, to provide relief assistance to the Iraqi people. In Pakistan, official and non-governmental organizations are on standby for such arrangements in order to bring help to their brothers and sisters in Iraq.

While the existence of the oil for food programme and the $2.5 billion in contracted shipments under way may be the best option to urgently meet the essential needs of the Iraqi people, it is vital to underline certain principles in this context.

First, the Security Council must reaffirm the permanent sovereignty of the Iraqi people over their natural resources. Control over those resources must revert to them as soon as possible. To that end, the sanctions imposed in the past must end quickly after the conflict.

Secondly, the Iraqi people should not be asked to bear the burden of the extra costs that will be incurred in making the adjustments in the existing oil for food programme by way of accelerating, delaying or diverting shipments. Those extra costs should be met through the normal insurance coverage. If paid for by the oil for food programme, they should be reimbursed by contributions from the international community as soon as possible.

Thirdly, apart from the humanitarian responsibilities of the parties to the conflict, the international community must also contribute to meeting the essential needs of the Iraqi people. The existence of the oil for food programme should not imply that the Iraqi people must pay for the emergency needs created by a conflict which is not of their making.

International humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people will need to be coherently planned and effectively coordinated. This can best be done by the United Nations. The Secretary-General may wish to consider the appointment of an appropriate high official who can serve as the focal point and coordinator of international relief assistance to Iraq.

The third objective for the Security Council, the United Nations and the international community is to contain the conflict, to arrest the spread of instability in the region and to restore the rule of law in Iraq and in international relations. The principles involved are clearly prescribed in our Charter: respect for the political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and of its neighbouring States; the right of the Iraqi people to choose their own political destiny and form of governance, in exercise of their right to self-determination; non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs; permanent sovereignty and control over their natural resources; respect for the religious and cultural traditions of the people of Iraq and for the sanctity of the holy places, which are among the most venerated in the Islamic world; and the right of the Iraqi nation to economic and social reconstruction.

Discussion, in our view, must commence within the Council and with others concerned, at the United Nations and elsewhere, to realize these principles and objectives.

Finally, to contain the Iraqi conflict, to end hostilities, to stabilize the region and to restore the rule of law, it will be essential to adopt a comprehensive and equitable approach to peace, security and progress in the region. This conflict is being conducted with the declared objective of securing the implementation of Security Council resolutions. As everyone acknowledges, the Middle East conflict must be resolved on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the vision of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in conditions of peace, justice and security. We look forward to concrete implementation of the positive intentions that have been announced for the Middle East.

Equally, the dispute between Pakistan and India over Jammu and Kashmir must be resolved through implementation of the Security Council resolutions prescribing the exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The refusal of India to implement the Security Council's resolutions, its refusal of dialogue, its resort to repression of the Kashmiri people, and its threatening of Pakistan with the use of force should also be unacceptable to the United Nations and to the Security Council.

The failure to display and implement equity will accentuate the resentment and the suspicions regarding the objectives of the current conflict. It will heighten the incidence of violence and terrorism. It will spread instability. It will erode the conduct of international relations on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law.

Whatever our views about the current conflict, we all acknowledge that we are living through a defining moment in world history.

The future of our countries and of our peoples will depend considerably on the manner in which we respond to this crisis. Every crisis presents challenges, but it also opens up opportunities. Our response to this crisis must therefore be principled, but it must also be wise, designed to construct a new world order for the twenty-first century and based on the principles of the Charter and on the unrelenting quest of the human race for global peace, progress and justice.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom fully subscribes to the balanced statement made earlier by Greece on behalf of the European Union and its affiliated European States.

My delegation has listened carefully to the points made by Member States of the United Nations in this debate. It is not surprising that, on a subject of this importance and intensity, there is such a wide diversity of views. Many speakers have referred to the 12-year period within which the peaceful disarmament of Iraq was attempted again and again by the Security Council. No one worked harder than the British Government to try to bring about that objective. No one has worked harder in recent weeks than the British Government to try to unite the Security Council around a position that

would have maintained the vigorous line adopted unanimously in resolution 1441 (2002).

I am fully aware that Member States, perhaps without exception, find the current situation deeply disappointing and distasteful. But they cannot set aside the clear, prolonged and universally available evidence that Iraq was repeatedly defying the United Nations in refusing complete disarmament of its weapons of mass destruction under the terms of successive resolutions. The express and explicit demands of the Security Council were never carried out by Iraq, and the United Nations has not succeeded in drawing the right conclusions about the consequences of that.

Resolution 1441 (2002) was adopted unanimously but not implemented with any rigour by a united Council. International peace and security cannot be maintained with responsibility by avoiding hard decisions. Iraq was clearly determined — even in the face of the threat of military action — to hang on to its prohibited weapons programmes and to develop others, with all the risks that that posed to peace and security in the region and more widely, including to the national security of the United Kingdom. Iraq has, furthermore, valued its defiance over the well-being of its own people, who have as a consequence endured a decade of sanctions.

Coalition action is therefore now under way to enforce Security Council decisions on complete Iraqi disarmament. This action is being undertaken in a manner that is directed only at the regime that is responsible for this failure to respect the United Nations. We are doing everything possible to minimize the effect on civilians, to leave infrastructure intact and to ensure that the necessary humanitarian assistance reaches the Iraqi people as quickly as possible.

We accept in full our obligations under international humanitarian law. The United Kingdom has already committed $80 million to support humanitarian agencies, including the excellent efforts of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. A further $300 million has been set aside for the United Kingdom's humanitarian response. In addition to that, the United Kingdom is contributing one fifth of the growing European Union contribution. Coalition engineers are already at work building a water pipeline from Kuwait to distribute supplies in southern Iraq, while a Royal Fleet auxiliary ship will shortly be arriving at Umm Qasr, carrying the first coalition consignment by sea of humanitarian supplies. And I should like to underline that these significant efforts in Iraq will not detract from the funding and the very high priority that we are giving to all other development activity, particularly in Africa.

The action that the United Kingdom is now taking with its coalition partners to uphold United Nations resolutions is both legitimate and multilateral. The use of force is authorized in the current circumstances under Security Council resolutions 678 (1990), 687 (1991) and 1441 (2002). A broad coalition of well over 40 States is supporting this action materially or politically.

We deeply regret the differences within the Security Council that have marked the past few months of discussion on this subject. Now is the time to put those behind us and to unite to ensure that the United Nations and the international community can act quickly to meet the needs of the Iraqi people during and after military action.

Our first priority must be to ensure that the changing realities on the ground in Iraq are reflected in the operation of the oil for food programme, on which 60 per cent of Iraqis remain dependent. Many in this debate have spoken in support of the Secretary-General's proposals on amending the programme. We have made progress within the Council on a draft resolution. We hope that the outstanding issues can be resolved rapidly so that the Secretary-General, as he has requested, has the necessary authority and flexibility to maximize the role of the United Nations in delivering humanitarian relief.

An equal priority, including in the short term — a priority recognized and acted upon by the British Prime Minister as a central plank of British foreign policy — is to restore the Middle East peace process to health. That means both publication and implementation of the road map and progress on security as well as on all other issues. The peace process must not be sidelined because of Iraq, nor must it be promoted only because of Iraq. Justice for the Palestinians, security for Israelis and Palestinians alike, and a comprehensive regional settlement must all be urgent priorities in their own right.

Looking further ahead, we will need to consider carefully the role that the United Nations can play in building a stable and prosperous Iraq. The expertise of the United Nations and that of the international

community will be needed to achieve that result. The United Kingdom is convinced that the United Nations must take a central role in the future of Iraq. The Prime Minister will meet the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters later today to discuss precisely that. I sincerely hope that the Council will play its part with responsibility in ensuring a well-functioning Iraq that no longer presents a threat to international peace and security, where people can enjoy their fundamental rights without fear of oppression, and where a representative Government provides effectively for its people and manages natural resources for the exclusive benefit of all the people of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Cameroon.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon): (*spoke in French*): Let me first thank the Non-Aligned Movement and the League of Arab States for having taken the initiative to request the convening of this open meeting. We are also pleased that this request has been granted.

Cameroon would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for having been present at the opening of our debate, to his personal commitment throughout the management of the Iraqi crisis and his praiseworthy efforts to avoid a tragic denouement with which we are all familiar. My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the speed with which he put proposals to the Security Council to quickly address the humanitarian tragedy in Iraq. We fully support the Secretary-General.

Cameroon is participating in this new debate on the situation in Iraq, both moved and aware of the seriousness of current circumstances. Despite lengthy months of negotiations and work, the Security Council was unable to prevent the war that broke out exactly one week ago in Iraq. My country regrets and deplores the fact that the Council was unable to reach a consensus in this regard. It is no longer time for us to indulge in recriminations, even if we must acknowledge the fact that we have all failed, either because of our intransigence or our desire to be right at all costs, or our inability to find a compromise.

We have lost many opportunities to stay on the path of peace and have thus dashed many expectations. Even up until Friday, 14 March 2003, six countries who are members of the Security Council, including Cameroon, vainly endeavoured to put forward some middle ground that would have provided a foundation for compromise. Unfortunately their suggestions were not followed. Cameroon's position regarding this crisis has repeatedly been expressed to the Council and elsewhere and I shall not repeat it now.

I would simply like to emphasize that Cameroon is a peace-loving country and intends to remain so. Accordingly, in the international arena Cameroon will continue to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes. Having said this, today is the time for realism and pragmatism, and a way to manage the urgent current difficulties must be found. A response to the humanitarian needs of the people of Iraq is a concern of paramount importance which must take priority.

Last week, Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented some extremely relevant and timely proposals as to the best way to manage the humanitarian crisis that goes hand in hand with this war. Cameroon fully supports those proposals and their implementation.

We consider that the Council must give clear authorization to the Secretary-General to conduct an emergency policy of humanitarian assistance in Iraq, mobilizing all of the United Nations agencies, beginning with the oil for food programme. Cameroon regrets to note the re-emergence of polemics which, without taking into account the suffering and tragedy of the Iraqi people, may make a hostage of the decision-making process in the Security Council. What is of utmost importance is that we intervene in the field. Any politicization of the discussion of how to manage this humanitarian crisis at this very grave moment seems inappropriate at this time.

There will certainly be a proper time to strike a balance sheet of our collective and individual failures on the part of member States of the Security Council. There will also be a time to draw lessons from the management of this international crisis. Cameroon, as is customary, will actively participate in the debate that is certain to take place in this connection. For the time being, we only wish that the conflict come to a speedy conclusion and pray that as few victims as possible result.

We must act as quickly as possible to adopt concerted measures in order to help the distressed Iraqi people. Today we must commit the United Nations to taking on the role of managing the Iraqi humanitarian tragedy. We have failed to prevent war, so let us work

together to restore peace. The major role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security will, once again, have meaning. The Iraqi people will find some comfort and the peoples of the United Nations may find new reasons for hope.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): We have listened carefully to our colleagues. We share many of their concerns. We welcome the expressions of support. We join many in looking to the future, to a better Iraq and we disagree profoundly with those who still avoid the central issue.

The responsibility for the current situation lies in the hands of the Iraqi regime, a regime which launched two bloody wars and which has refused for 12 years to give up weapons of mass destruction and join its neighbours in peace. Iraq has repeatedly refused to respond to diplomatic overtures, economic sanctions and other peaceful means designed to bring about Iraqi compliance with its obligations to disarm. The actions that coalition forces are undertaking are an appropriate response. The military campaign in Iraq is not a war against the people of Iraq, but rather against a regime that has denied the will of the international community for more than 12 years.

It was regrettable that the Government of Iraq decided not to take the final opportunity for compliance provided in Security Council resolution 1441 (2002). The coalition response is legitimate and not unilateral. Resolution 687 (1991) imposed a series of obligations on Iraq that were the conditions of the ceasefire. It has long been recognized and understood that a material breach of those obligations removes the basis of the ceasefire and revives the authority to use force under resolution 678 (1990). Resolution 1441 (2002) explicitly found Iraq in continuing material breach. In view of Iraq's additional material breaches, the basis for the existing ceasefire has been removed and the use of force is authorized under resolution 678 (1990).

As President Bush has said, we are acting to compel Iraq's compliance with these resolutions, because the United States, along with a coalition of more than 48 countries, believes that the risk of inaction is too great to tolerate.

I would now like to turn to the efforts being made to provide the most rapid and effective assistance to the Iraqi people. The current humanitarian situation in Iraq is fragile, all the more so as a result of the policies and actions of the Iraqi regime over the last two decades. The United States has been planning, across all relevant United States Government agencies and in support of United Nations efforts, to anticipate likely requirements. We and other members of the coalition are prepared to administer necessary relief as quickly as possible. We have consulted and are continuing to consult with interested Governments, regional and international organizations, civil society and, of course, the United Nations.

We have pre-positioned $16.3 million worth of relief supplies, including water-supply materials, blankets and other shelter items in the region. In addition, we have contributed more than $300 million in food aid and more than $200 million in health and other humanitarian assistance to United Nations agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization, and a multitude of non-governmental organizations. Included in these totals is a $10 million contribution to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

As we increase United States contributions, we also urge other donors to contribute to these critical humanitarian efforts.

We have also fielded the largest ever disaster assistance response team, composed of United States civilian humanitarian experts, to the region to assess needs, liaise with partners and provide in-field grant-making capacity. Forty-eight members of the team are already positioned in Kuwait and additional staff will arrive in the coming days. In fact, such a team conducted an initial assessment of the port of Umm Qasr yesterday. Its initial reports suggest that security is acceptable for more detailed assessment teams to move into the area.

We welcome the 19 March letter from the Secretary-General requesting the necessary authorities to ensure the continuity of the oil for food programme. We fully support his request and we believe the Council is close to agreement on a resolution that responds favourably to the Secretary-General's requests. We trust that other members of the Council

share the objective of resuming the flow of humanitarian goods through the oil for food programme as soon as possible. Progress on this resolution must accelerate, putting political debating points aside, if we are to minimize any interruption of the programme.

There would be serious humanitarian implications for the people of Iraq if the Council fails to do so. Sixty per cent of the people of Iraq rely on oil for food, regardless of the security situation. Insistence on narrow economic interests and extraneous political matters in what essentially constitutes a technical adjustment of a humanitarian resolution would prevent us from giving the Secretary-General the flexibility he needs to begin immediately making arrangements for the urgently needed humanitarian supplies. We urge experts to move swiftly through their discussions and provide the Council with a compromise text as soon as possible.

As the coalition acts to enforce the relevant Security Council resolutions and the international community joins together to meet the humanitarian needs of the people of Iraq, much thought has been given to the future of Iraq. Our thinking is guided by a number of principles. First, we will demonstrate to the people of Iraq and the world that the United States and the coalition aspire to liberate, not to occupy. Secondly, Iraq must be disarmed of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons production capabilities and the means to deliver such weapons. Thirdly, we must eliminate Iraq's terrorist infrastructure. Fourthly, Iraq must be preserved as a unified State, with its territorial integrity intact. Concern for the safety of Iraq's people has been foremost in our minds from the moment hostilities began. The United States and the coalition allies will provide security to prevent chaos and retribution. Fifthly, along with other partners, we must begin the process of economic and political reconstruction, working to assist the people of Iraq in putting their country on path towards prosperity and freedom.

As President Bush has told the world:

> "We cannot know the duration of this conflict, yet we know the outcome. Unlike Saddam Hussain, we believe the people of Iraq are deserving and capable of human liberty."

Assisting and rebuilding a post-Saddam Iraq will be a huge undertaking. Success will only be possible by working with Iraq's neighbours and the international community. This message was reinforced by President Bush and the leaders of Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom in their statement at the conclusion of the Atlantic Summit on 9 March in the Azores. The four undertook a solemn obligation to help the people of Iraq build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours. They committed to work in close partnership with international institutions, including the United Nations, our allies and partners and bilateral donors. The statement concluded with a call on the international community to join with us in helping to realize a better future for the people of Iraq.

We want to return control over the sovereignty of Iraq to the people of Iraq as soon as possible. We will stay as long as it is necessary to do this, but not one day more.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): An unprovoked military action has been undertaken, in violation of international law and in circumvention of the Charter, against Iraq, a sovereign State and Member of the United Nations. The toll of casualties and destruction is growing. There is a looming threat of a humanitarian, economic and ecological disaster. The negative consequences of this illegal military action are already having an impact on other countries of the region, the Muslim world and the overall state of international relations.

Russia, together with other States, made vigorous efforts to prevent war and achieve a political settlement of the Iraq problem. The unanimous adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), together with all other measures of exerting pressure on Baghdad, provided a realistic way to disarm Iraq through peaceful means in full keeping with the decisions of the United Nations.

To our profound regret, that possibility was thwarted precisely at a time when Iraq was more actively cooperating with inspectors and when the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency had submitted their work programmes to the Council. The implementation of those programmes would have made it possible to provide a final and objective answer to the question of whether Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.

The military action undertaken by the United States and the United Kingdom just at that moment — in violation of Security Council resolutions — cannot

be justified in any way. In fact, those countries were unable to provide any proof to support their allegations regarding Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction and Baghdad's support for international terrorism — or with regard to a threat to the countries of the region or to international security emanating from Iraq. I would also like to note that no proof has been found in the course of the ongoing military action to support such accusations.

It is clear to everyone that the use of force against Iraq in an effort to change the political regime of a sovereign State runs totally counter to the fundamental principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations. The entire course of events bears out the Russian Government's assessment of the war in Iraq as a serious political mistake. The military action has already gone beyond the local context. It is not only the population of Iraq that is suffering, so too are the peoples of neighbouring countries. That action has become a potential source of destabilization for the situation in the Middle East, as well as for the world as a whole.

We are also seriously alarmed at the humanitarian situation in Iraq. We support the efforts being made by the Secretary-General, in cooperation with United Nations programmes and funds, to mobilize voluntary contributions to meet the needs of the Iraqi people. Russia is contributing to those efforts, in cooperation with the Governments of the appropriate countries, in particular with those of Iran and Turkey, as well as with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. Steps are being taken to provide humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees. In particular, a hospital capable of accommodating 5,000 patients will be set up in Iran. Thereafter, another two hospitals will be set up, as well as a refugee camp. In addition, plans are being made to establish refugee camps in Turkey.

I would like in particular to emphasize the need for full compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. Under the Convention, the forces occupying Iraq's territory bear responsibility for resolving the humanitarian problems of its people. Of course, all parties must comply with all other norms of international humanitarian law, particularly as they pertain to the treatment of wounded persons and prisoners of war, the protection of civilians and of facilities vital to the population and to preventing the use of excessively injurious materiel.

Bearing in mind the exceptional circumstances in which the Iraqi population finds itself, we are also prepared, along with other members of the Security Council, to resolve the issue of temporary amendments to the procedures followed in the oil for food programme in order to meet the humanitarian needs of Iraqis, given that the programme's international personnel have been evacuated due to the war. However, we will not support the proposal to restructure the mechanism for this humanitarian programme in the light of the military scenario. That is not a technical matter.

While humanitarian issues are important, there is no more urgent task at the moment than to try to halt the war and to return to the path of a political settlement within the context of the Security Council. The overwhelming majority of participants in our debate have spoken out in favour of that. To that end, we will continue to oppose both direct and indirect attempts to legitimize the use of force against Iraq or to shift the responsibility for that action to the international community through the United Nations. That will be our approach to any effort made by the Council with regard to settling the question of Iraq. The fundamental principles that must underpin those efforts were formulated yesterday by the Secretary-General. They include respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Iraq and the inalienable right of the Iraqi people to determine their political future for themselves and to exercise control over their natural resources. I am convinced that no member of the Security Council would really object to those principles.

Russia's leaders are pursuing intensive contacts with a broad range of States, including members of the Security Council, in order to find a political solution to the crisis. Objective conditions to that end still exist. The potential of the United Nations is far from being exhausted, a fact that even those who support the use of force have recognized. We are open to engaging in a dialogue with everyone. We are convinced that differences with regard to the problem of Iraq should not become a pretext to rush to confrontation in world affairs.

However the situation concerning Iraq evolves, we cannot escape the need to search together for effective answers to new threats and challenges and to strengthen the mechanisms of the United Nations that are necessary to do so. The goal of the international

community to find mutually advantageous collective solutions to global problems cannot become hostage to the situation in Iraq. However, the extent to which we can all resolve this problem together, pooling our efforts to minimize the damage caused by that crisis, will directly determine the kind of world in which we shall live in the future — be it a world based on the supremacy of international law or one in which chaos and the arbitrary use of military might prevail. I hope we will all recognize our responsibility vis-à-vis that matter.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): A few days ago, the United States and a few other countries, sidestepping the Security Council, launched military action against Iraq in the face of the opposition of an absolute majority of the international community. Such an action constitutes a violation of the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. War is bound to bring about humanitarian disasters. It has already caused civilian casualties and loss of property in Iraq. War will also have a negative impact on safety, stability and development in the region and beyond. This is a matter of profound concern to us.

The Chinese Government has always advocated a political settlement to the problem of Iraq within the United Nations framework. It has also demanded that the Iraqi Government implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council in a comprehensive and genuine manner. At the same time, we believe that the international community should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), which was adopted unanimously last November, is an important basis for the political settlement of the question of Iraq. It is the universal view of the international community that achieving the goal of peacefully disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction is possible through the strict implementation of that resolution. China, along with other concerned countries, has made tireless efforts to realize that goal. However, to our profound regret, the weapons inspections being carried out by United Nations inspectors were suspended at a time when they had been making steady progress.

The Security Council is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We are in favour of and support the continued important role of the Security Council on the question of Iraq. At present, the Council is undertaking intensive consultations on a draft resolution concerning the adjustment of the oil for food programme, on the basis of the proposal put forward by Secretary-General Annan, with a view to mitigating the humanitarian emergencies of the Iraqi people.

The Chinese Government has participated in the relevant consultations in a positive and constructive spirit in the hope of achieving a consensus very soon. The humanitarian relief supplies provided by the Chinese Government to Iraqi refugees will be shipped to Jordan in the coming days. China will continue to provide humanitarian assistance within the limits of its capabilities.

Opposition to war and the maintenance of peace are the common aspirations of the world's peoples. The Chinese Government has been consistently committed to the maintenance of international peace and security, advocated the settlement of international disputes by political means and opposed the use or threat of force in international affairs. We strongly call on the countries concerned to halt their military action and to return to the proper path of the political settlement of the Iraqi issue.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): France regrets that military action has been engaged in Iraq without the endorsement of the United Nations. To the very end, in cooperation with the members of the Security Council, the countries of the region and the entire international community, France strove to demonstrate convincingly that the disarmament of Iraq could be achieved through the peaceful means of inspections. We remain convinced that that approach was both correct and viable. These efforts, unfortunately, did not succeed. This conflict will be fraught with consequences for the future.

Our prime concern today is the fate of the civilian population in Iraq. That is why we hope that these military operations will be as rapid and as least deadly as possible and that a prompt end to the conflict will spare Iraq's civilians further suffering. We urge the belligerents to do everything they can to spare human lives. They must scrupulously comply with the rules imposed on them by international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions.

France is prepared to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqis, in support of the efforts made by the United Nations and the European Union. The international community must mobilize. We recall, however, that the primary responsibility to assist and to meet the basic needs of civilian populations lies, in accordance with international humanitarian law, with the occupying forces in the areas under their control. It is in that context that the Security Council must seek the prompt adoption of a resolution to mobilize efforts urgently to alleviate the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people, inter alia, through the resumption of the oil for food programme. We hope that we will soon reach agreement on such a text and that it will be adopted shortly.

France reiterates its commitment to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. These principles are enshrined in the Charter and were recalled in resolution 687 (1991) and subsequent resolutions. They must be fully respected. Accordingly, we call on the countries of the region to refrain from any initiative that would further exacerbate the situation. The sovereignty of Iraq belongs to the Iraqis. The Iraqis must remain masters of the future of their country. These principles must be taken into account forthwith in order to facilitate a settlement to the crisis that respects the framework they define.

The re-establishment of lasting peace will be possible only in a collective context, in which the United Nations must be central. As soon as the situation permits, the United Nations will have to be allowed to exercise its full responsibility, in strict respect for its independence. It will have to verify the disarmament of Iraq, as required by the resolutions in force. It will have to help the Iraqi people to regain control over its destiny and to choose its future.

Faithful to these principles, France will continue to act to ensure that crises which threaten international peace and security find fair solutions through collective action in the framework of the United Nations.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Saddam Hussain's repeated non-compliance over the past 12 years with his obligation to eliminate his weapons of mass destruction — as set forth in many resolutions of the Security Council and most recently in resolution 1441 (2002), which gave Iraq one last chance to disarm — has compelled an international coalition, which includes my country, to take enforcement action to achieve that disarmament.

Spain and other members of the Security Council used to the maximum all available diplomatic resources to achieve the disarmament of Iraq by peaceful means. Resolution 1441 (2002) and its reference to others adopted by this Council supported the legality of the action undertaken by the coalition. We want military operations to end as soon as possible, with a minimum loss of human life.

Spain fully agrees with the conclusions of the recent Council of Europe, which highlighted its commitment to maintaining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, respect for human rights and the rights of minorities, and disarmament. The conclusions also emphasized the primary role of the United Nations. We also defend the indisputable right of the Iraqis to determine their political future and to control and dispose of their natural resources.

The highest priority for Spain at this time is the Iraqi population and the provision of humanitarian assistance as a matter of the utmost urgency. Spain has offered assistance to alleviate the consequences of the situation in Iraq, valued at €34 million and earmarked for United Nations programmes, the Red Cross, other non-governmental organizations and the countries neighbouring Iraq to ease the situation of refugees.

Moreover, Spain feels that the Security Council must adopt a pragmatic approach by allowing the United Nations and its Secretary-General the broadest possible room for manoeuvring in meeting the humanitarian needs that arise and, to that end, by making the oil for food programme flexible. In any case; humanitarian assistance must reach those to whom it is provided as soon as possible. This is a matter of urgency.

It would be incomprehensible if, because of differences in the Security Council arising from political considerations of one kind or another, we were to deprive hundreds of thousands of human beings of aid that in many cases is vital to their survival. The spectacle of a Council bogged down for days by some political nuance would not be understood, nor would it be very edifying or contribute to the prestige of this organ or the United Nations. Humanitarian assistance cannot wait.

After the divergences of recent months, the Council should now recover its unity on this pressing question. But the Security Council and the United Nations have before them other outstanding challenges of extraordinary importance that must be promptly addressed once the current crisis is overcome. I am referring to the question of the Middle East — a tragic, anguishing and unsustainable situation which, through the accusations of double standards, fuels misunderstanding and the understandable frustration of the population of that area. The serious implementation of the road map is a necessary and urgent step for achieving the establishment of two viable, respected States living in peace.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have listened most attentively to approximately 80 delegations, which have expressed their views on the situation in Iraq at this open meeting of the Security Council, convened thanks to the League of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement. Chile can only understand the somber and depressed atmosphere that has been so clearly expressed in so many of the statements made yesterday and today. Our position as a member of the Security Council, is known by all Members of the Organization. Up to the very last minute, together with other members of the Council, we promoted a peaceful solution, convinced that it was possible and that it was the best approach, both for the international community and for the countries directly involved in the conflict.

For a week now, we have been meeting in the Council Chamber, and have then walked through the corridors and rooms of the United Nations, surrounded by television screens that display the horrible images of war, like accusatory eyes reminding us that we could have and should have done more. Today, however, it seems urgent that we devote ourselves to looking to the future, especially the future of the United Nations.

I would like to start with a general observation. My country values multilateralism, not just as a convenient, available option but as a necessary and indispensable requisite that is part of our identity as a sovereign nation, our democratic ideals and our geographical dimension and location.

That is why we accord a vital role to the United Nations. We admire how, over the past 50 years, the United Nations has contributed to regulating relations among States and to a very broad range of humanitarian activities. Though imperfect, defective and frequently bureaucratic, no one can deny the irreplaceable role it has played in protecting the security of persons and in promoting peace and sustainable development. Over the last 50 years, it has dealt with many crises and challenges to its authority and relevance. After each crisis, as soon as the dust has settled, the principle actors have returned to the United Nations. All have recognized in the end that in it lies our sole source of international legitimacy and legality.

Yet, we should not think that these resources are inexhaustible. Immersed as we all are in a globalized world, faced with a situation that will define the shape of our international system for many decades, we believe that the risks the United Nations is now facing are great. That is why we fully agree with the Secretary-General: this is the time for the members of the Council to make a special effort to bring their positions closer together and to resume a dialogue that restores the Organization's capacity to act.

Our effort should be patiently aimed at finding those principles that unite us, in a deliberate attempt to find the common ground that made it possible two years ago for the Council and the United Nations as a whole to adopt a unanimous position in the fight against terrorism.

We could start with the proposals made yesterday in the Council by the Secretary-General when he signalled the two principles that should guide our decisions on the future of Iraq.

> "The first principle is respect for Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. The second ... is respect for the right of the Iraqi people to determine their own political future and control their own natural resources."

We hope that those principles can contribute to uniting the members of the Council and to orienting us in taking the very difficult decisions awaiting us in the very near future.

Today, we should devote ourselves to resolving the humanitarian situation in Iraq. Chile supports a pragmatic, flexible and urgent approach to the proposals of the Secretary-General on this issue. The information that the Council has in its possession leads one to think that if the Council does not adopt a resolution on this issue in the next two or three days,

we will have to grieve over the greatest humanitarian catastrophe that the United Nations has ever faced. We have hope that work to produce a draft resolution acceptable to all will be successful in a very short time. But the Council must give its support to all initiatives to stabilize and to assist a region so greatly afflicted by the disasters of war.

Chile maintains its hope that the proposals for a road map which, it was announced by President Bush, was recently submitted to the Palestinian and Israeli parties, will make it possible to achieve headway on an issue that is so central and crucial to international peace and security. The creation of a Palestinian State coexisting in peace with the State of Israel is an issue to which Chile attaches the greatest priority, and to which the Council must devote all its energy.

As do all in the Chamber, my country desires a cessation of hostilities in Iraq. We call for the full implementation of the Geneva Conventions and respect for international humanitarian law on the part of both parties. We express our regret at the death of civilians and soldiers. Both bring mourning to families both here and elsewhere. We express our condolences at the violence that continues to morally mutilate the lives of so many thousands of children because it leaves them forever incapable of harbouring the hope that civilized life is possible.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): As an associate country of the European Union, Bulgaria supports the statement made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Greece on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to make a few comments in my national capacity. Bulgaria very much regrets that the diplomatic efforts of the international community to disarm Iraq by peaceful means did not produce the hoped for results. In recent months, my delegation defended in the Council a clear, consistent position for the full implementation of resolution 1441 (2002). My country made every possible effort to find a compromise among the various approaches within the Security Council in order to preserve the Council's unity.

Military action turned out to be the last recourse for disarming Iraq. We confirm our position because Iraq was in clear breach of its disarmament obligations. The Government of Iraq is the sole party responsible for the serious consequences that it is now suffering. The Baghdad authorities did not take their last chance to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1441 (2002).

My country appeals to all parties involved in the conflict to strictly comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding civilians and prisoners of war. Bulgaria believes that the international community should not give up its responsibility to Iraq. To the contrary, it should make every necessary effort at the humanitarian and financial levels to rebuild the country following the conflict.

The main task we face is to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people, including to refugees in neighbouring countries. Bulgaria is prepared to participate in this effort. My country expresses its gratitude to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations humanitarian organizations for the steps they have taken to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people. We believe that the Security Council should adopt as soon as possible — if possible, tomorrow — a resolution on humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people, which should adjust the oil for food programme and expand the Secretary-General's authority in that area.

Reaching an agreement on this subject is particularly important for the unity of the Security Council and to reinforce its credibility. My country unreservedly supports the proposals, put forward in the Council by the Secretary-General, to adapt the programme to the current situation on the ground. Acting effectively, and particularly with speed, is essential right now. The Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, with his moral and political prestige, is the best possible guarantor that such action can be successful. The Council must give him the flexibility he requires to achieve this task.

As soon as the coalition's military operation is over, every necessary effort will have to be made to safeguard Iraq's territorial integrity, facilitate the emergence of democratic institutions, establish genuine rule of law and promote the country's return to the community of free States. This process should logically lead to the lifting of sanctions against Iraq and the restoration of normal political and economic conditions for the Iraqi people. The matter of rebuilding the Iraqi society after the conflict should be resolved with the assistance of the United Nations, with respect for the right of the Iraqi people to determine their political

future and to exercise full control over their natural resources.

Continued monitoring of weapons of mass destruction is particularly important. Monitoring must be carried out through the resumption in due course of the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the adaptation of its work programme to new circumstances.

Despite the undesirable turn that events have taken in Iraq, Bulgaria still hopes that the United Nations will remain at the core of the international order and that the Security Council will continue to assume the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and the reconstruction of Iraq after the conflict.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The United States of America and the United Kingdom carried out their threats to initiate a war of aggression against Iraq, circumventing international legitimacy. The United Nations, international legitimacy, international law and all institutions of international cooperation that were specifically created following the Second World War have engaged in an intense debate on the real capacity to stop the strong when they attack the weak and on the possibility of imposing their resolutions on the strong when the particular interests of the strong run counter to the interests of the international community and to peace and security in the world.

During the debates at the highest level, particularly in the Security Council, Syria warned of the danger of overlooking Council resolutions. We have stressed that there is no legal or moral justification for waging this war against the Iraqi people. We have also cautioned that unilateral action by the United States and its circumvention of the will of the international community, as represented in the Security Council, would lead to grave consequences, particularly to division and chaos in international relations. Such consequences would arise because of the harm done to international legitimacy and to the credibility and role of the Council in achieving international peace and security, for which it was created, and because the logic of military force, hegemony and diktat are being imposed on international relations, instead of democracy and mutual respect.

What is most regrettable is not just that a State with tremendous military power has attacked a country weakened by sanctions and an embargo imposed on it for more than 12 years. Rather, what is really regrettable is the collapse of a system of values to which the international community has agreed, whether it concerns the use of military force or respect for international humanitarian law. That system that began to crystallise at the end of the nineteenth century and evolved to a high degree, which we all see today. The aggression that the United States of America has introduced into the twenty-first century will be recorded by history as a black page, because the United States has turned its back and has closed its ears to the appeals of international public opinion, which said no to war.

The war is an act of defiance of the Security Council itself, the great majority of whose members refused to adopt another resolution. They all demanded respect for Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1441 (2002). They called for the continued activities of international inspectors based on the proactive cooperation shown by Iraq, as reflected in the reports of the inspectors submitted to the Security Council.

This war is not justifiable because it is not aimed at the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The inspectors have stressed that there is no evidence of the existence of such weapons. The objective is to occupy Iraq, to subject the region to hegemony and exploitation, and to help Israel — which does possess weapons of mass destruction and perpetrates war crimes against the Palestinian people — continue its occupation and defy the will of international legitimacy.

At their meeting that concluded two days ago in Cairo, Arab foreign ministers condemned the Anglo-American attack against Iraq. They stressed the solidarity of Arab States with Iraq and their support for Iraq in facing up to aggression.

Syria wishes to underline the statement issued by the Arab foreign ministers, particularly their call for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Anglo-American invading troops from Iraqi territory, and its belief that those forces should bear the brunt of the material, legal and moral aftermath of this aggression.

Could the world, which not that long ago emerged from the quagmire of the cold war, have imagined that the alternative would be the people of

Iraq, including the children, rushing to shelters, many dying and others losing their homes in Umm Qasr, Baghdad, Mosul, Nasiriyah and Najaf? Who could have imagined that the values of democracy, on which the American and other peoples have been schooled, would translate into bombs and fires, burning innocent civilians in various parts of Iraq?

Could the Syrian workers who were fleeing the flames of battle in major Iraqi cities — 5 of whom were killed and more than 10 wounded — have imagined that American warplanes would come from afar, without justification, to kill and wound them, merely because they were seeking safety and security for themselves and for their families?

Some have attempted to mislead the world, claiming that the wars they will wage this century will be "clean" wars. But when has killing and destruction ever been clean? War is war, and has been since the beginning of history. People have an increasing hatred of such wars when they are waged without legal document, in flagrant defiance of international law and humanity.

Our fear is that the victory sought by the United States of America will come at the expense of the blood of thousands of Iraqi innocents, for whose benefit, the United States claims, the war is being waged, in order to rescue or liberate them. But who gave the United States and others any such right?

The urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people are a pressing issue that must be taken up. Syria will make every effort to do so. Nevertheless, humanitarian aspects must not be exploited by some for narrow political gain or for the purpose of misleading international public opinion and diverting its attention away from the central issue — an end to aggression and an immediate withdrawal of the invading forces.

Syria urges the Security Council to make every effort to put an end to this destructive war and to prevent it from reaping the lives of more Iraqi and non-Iraqi innocent citizens. We call on the Security Council to take up this grave situation, because the Council is the essential point of reference in such difficult international circumstances. It must call on the aggressor immediately to withdraw its forces from Iraq, to respect international legitimacy and international humanitarian law, and in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to put an end to the policy of destroying the infrastructure that was built by Iraqis with their sacrifice and sweat.

Syria calls for a return to international legitimacy and for respect for international law under the auspices of the United Nations and the Security Council. We urge that international issues be dealt with in a just and balanced manner. We must condemn the double standards that are used in dealing with international issues, in particular that of ending the Israeli occupation of Arab land and the peaceful resolution of the Iraqi issue.

The logic of force, unilateralism and hegemony will certainly not lead humanity to the future to which we all aspire.

Mr. Pieuger (Germany): My delegation fully supports the position of the European Union, as presented yesterday by the Greek Presidency.

The Security Council comes together in difficult times. The war in Iraq is a tragedy for those affected and for all of us. While we speak, men, women and children, civilians and soldiers alike, are suffering from its tragic consequences. The Security Council cannot remain silent in this situation.

We deeply regret that our intensive efforts to achieve a peaceful solution through this Council did not succeed. I think that Germany and other members of the Security Council made constructive proposals that were conducive to reaching our common goal — the peaceful disarmament of Iraq.

But now we have to face the reality of war. However, as Foreign Minister Fischer highlighted recently, this is not the time for accusations or apportioning blame. Our focus should now be on the future and on the immediate challenges for the international community.

The foremost and most important challenge is, of course, bringing this war to an end as soon as possible. But while it continues, we call upon all parties to the conflict to assume their responsibilities under international humanitarian law, especially the Geneva conventions. Prisoners of war in particular have to be treated in compliance with it.

We are deeply concerned about the plight of the Iraqi people and the imminent threat of a humanitarian disaster. Even before the war, the Iraqi people depended to a very large extent on the oil for food

programme, which is now suspended. As the Secretary-General pointed out yesterday, the primary responsibility for meeting their needs now falls on the belligerents who control the territory. However, the international community and the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations, for their part, must do everything possible to avert a humanitarian disaster. Germany stands ready to contribute in this regard. Furthermore, as we now hold the presidency of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 661 (1990), we are actively involved in the ongoing efforts to adapt the oil for food programme to the new situation.

We have heard from the Secretary-General that, before the war, 80 per cent of the food basket in Iraq came from the oil for food programme. Sixty per cent of the population depends on that programme 100 per cent, and other people are also dependent on it. Therefore we must make sure that the necessary adaptations are made in order to get the programme, which has been stopped, going again as soon as the situation on the ground allows it. We hope that the Council will regain its unity of purpose by adopting a resolution on this issue as quickly as possible. I will introduce a draft resolution shortly that I hope will find unanimous support in the Council.

Germany is convinced that the United Nations and the Security Council must continue to play the central role in the resolution of the Iraq crisis. We fully concur with the Secretary-General that the two guiding principles on which this resolution must be based are, first, respect for its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, and, secondly, the right of the Iraqi people to overcome their isolation, determine their own future and use their natural resources to their own benefit. For its part, Germany will actively contribute to the future work of the Security Council on this matter. In the light of numerous international crises and challenges, we see a need to restore the unity of the international community and of the Security Council.

The United Nations, in our view, is the key institution for the preservation of peace and stability and for the peaceful reconciliation of interests in the world of today and tomorrow. The war in Iraq cannot call into question the foundations of the rules-based system of collective security provided for by the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council bears, and will continue to bear, primary responsibility for world peace and international security. There is no substitute for the Council's function as a guardian of peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Guinea.

This meeting is being held at a particularly serious time. My country, which until the end believed in a peaceful solution to the crisis, profoundly regrets that the Council itself was unable to rise above its divisions in order to adopt a common approach. However, the tragic reality that we are now witnessing with apprehension is challenging all of us. At this stage, it is not the time for recriminations.

My delegation, which has always called for Council unity, believes that this situation is so grave that we must all demonstrate responsibility in order to overcome the new challenges. In the days to come, we must together strive to search for ways and means to restore the unity of this body so as to give it the effectiveness and dynamism it requires. More than ever before, it is urgent that we set aside our differences and concentrate on what is now essential: the fate of the Iraqi people, confronted by a new trial.

Several days after the unleashing of hostilities, the international community is questioning the effectiveness of the Security Council, which, nonetheless, initiated many actions aimed at a positive resolution of the Iraqi question. However, we understand the concerns expressed during this debate.

It was in that context that the Security Council immediately agreed to hold this meeting, providing an opportunity for all Member States that wished to express themselves on this issue to do so. The negotiations under way for the adoption of a draft resolution based on Iraq's urgent humanitarian needs, on the basis of the proposals made by the Secretary-General, are also noteworthy.

In that regard, the risk of a humanitarian catastrophe that the Iraqi population now faces is a source of concern for my delegation. Far be it from us to debate the merits of any war, but this one undoubtedly affects a population already harshly affected by several years of sanctions. Furthermore, the suspension of the activities of the oil for food programme highlights the precariousness of the situation, given that more than 60 per cent of the

population was highly dependent on it in terms of essential provisions.

I wish to reaffirm my country's attachment to the central role of the United Nations in managing international relations, particularly in preserving international peace and security. We support the Secretary-General's appeal to Member States to mobilize the necessary financial resources to tackle the urgent new situation prevailing on the ground and to relieve the suffering of the traumatized Iraqi people.

In conclusion, as we express the hope for a swift end to the war, we hope that it will have the lowest possible number of victims, that the civilian population will be spared and that damage to the economic and social infrastructure will be limited.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of Iraq has requested the floor to make another statement.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express my sincere thanks to the majority of Member States of the United Nations, whose honourable voices have expressed their views and those of their people and their Governments with regard to the need of putting an end to this aggressive war as a violation of international law, moral values and the Charter of the United Nations.

As I listened to a number of voices of those who are misled or who have misled others, which declared that they have joined the camp of war and aggression, in opposition to the United Nations and its Charter, I am fully aware that they have spoken not because their people wanted them to do so, but because of reasons that are well known to everyone. The warnings that the United States has made to many other Member States have reached us and everyone else present here. I believe that the United States used a carrot-and-stick policy in order to intimidate or entice smaller States to make them do its bidding. I understand that some other States whose military bases are now being occupied by hundreds of thousands of American soldiers have also been coerced and have no other choice but to obey the orders of the United States.

What I have just said is a general comment; I have two other comments to make.

My first comment concerns statements on the humanitarian aspect, to which we have all listened. I believe that I cannot disregard the inhuman effects of the aggression against Iraq. We all know what is going on there in terms of killing and destruction of the infrastructure, the economy and the agricultural system, as well as deprivation of basic provisions, particularly medicine. We cannot disregard this issue, but it has been represented from two points of view: a purely humanitarian perspective — and I congratulate all States that have begun to think seriously about it, because it is a very serious issue, and all of humanity will bear responsibility for it if they do not move quickly to provide assistance to Iraq — and from another perspective, represented by the United States and the United Kingdom, which from the very beginning wanted to put this issue before the world in order to mislead it, distract it and alter its views concerning the main issue, which is that of war and aggression.

The United States wanted to legitimize its aggressive, criminal military action against Iraq after it had lost its legitimacy, owing to its inability to persuade a majority of Security Council members to adopt its criminal draft resolution. Therefore, it has tried to use another way to achieve its objectives, and I think it is a British plan, because the British are well known for their trickery. As I listened today to the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom, the stance of both countries seemed to be that they are shedding tears over Iraq and that what really interests them is Iraq's future. I do not know how they accept this — they kill someone, shed crocodile tears over him and then attend his funeral.

What is said today reminds me of what General Maude said in 1917, and I referred to it in a previous statement. British General Maude came to Iraq in 1917. He faced the people of Baghdad and said, "I come to you as a liberator, not a conqueror." Britain then stayed in Iraq from 1917 until 1958. Today, the new colonialists come and tell us they have come as liberators, not as conquerors, and will need some time to withdraw. If the Security Council does not pay attention to the term "some time", we will know the reality of the American-British neo-colonialism in Iraq.

The United States concluded contracts to rebuild the infrastructure of Iraq in 1997. Six years ago they had commercial industrial contracts with companies that some members of the American Administration

supervise; in fact, you can find these contracts on the Internet. Some of them are to rebuild the oil industry infrastructure, which is the basic reason for the war, some are for rebuilding the infrastructure of the ports, and others for rebuilding the infrastructure of Iraqi industry.

I apologize to all those States that participated with the United States in this vision and in the aggression, such as Spain, Bulgaria and many other small States, because they will get nothing from the cake, if Iraq falls. This "cake" was pre-planned by the United States and the United Kingdom even before Iraq entered Kuwait in 1991. The contracts are safeguarded and the companies have been preparing themselves for many years, but officially these contracts were concluded in 1997. Today the carrot is provided to those many States which, regrettably, are contravening the values and principles of the United Nations in following the caravan of war and aggression.

The last point I would like to make is that Iraq has not crossed the Atlantic to attack America and in fact has no connection with whatever occurred in the United States in September 2001. Despite the fact that we have no weapons of mass destruction, the United States armed forces have crossed the Atlantic Ocean by the hundreds of thousands — and they are preparing hundreds of thousands of other soldiers, because their forces have been defeated — in order to finish off Iraq and to control the region.

The warning I would like to make to the members of the Security Council is that the United States and the United Kingdom were hoodwinked when they were told that the Iraqi people will receive them with flowers and embraces and adulations, that the children and their mothers will come and rejoice at the coming of the United States forces. What happened is that the Iraqi army, until now, has not confronted the United States forces. The Iraqi people — the women, students, peasants — are facing the American and British forces in Iraq today. Therefore, when the United States found itself facing fierce resistance by the Iraqi people, who are keen on their independence, security and sovereignty, and since they realized that the Arab people and Muslim people and people all over the world support Iraq and call upon it to resist, the United States has started to destroy the Iraqi people.

Yesterday the United States destroyed 200 houses in one suburb of Nasiriyah, and they have continued to destroy residential areas in A'zamiyah and Yarmook, in Baghdad and many poor suburbs in Basra. We do not know what the future holds for us. The United States will destroy the Iraqi people because the Iraqis hate it and because the Iraqi people will resist and will pay the price in blood in order to get the United States out of Iraq.

The Iraqi people will defend the principles of the United Nations and the principles of peace and security. Therefore I call upon the Security Council to take notice that the United States and Great Britain and Australia are about to start a real war of extermination that will kill and destroy everything. Then, regret will be of no use. If the humanitarian issue is very important then halting the war is more important, as it is the cause of this deteriorating humanitarian situation.

I call upon all of you to move towards taking a resolution to halt the war, to halt the aggression, to rid the Iraqi people of what they are facing.

Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to tell the entire international community that Iraq is committed to the Geneva Conventions and the provisions of international humanitarian law. They will see no harm from Iraq except self-defence — defence of its people, its dignity, sovereignty and independence.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.